

# Fifth estate



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\$3

**You have been  
chosen . . .**

**to  
take back  
your life**

**Special Issue:**

**Surreality  
Anarchy  
Poetry**

**— Dept. of Homeland Spontaneity**

The morning comes, the night decays, the watchmen leave their stations;

The grave is burst, the spices shed, the linen wrapped up;  
The bones of death, the covering clay, the sinews shrunk & dry'd  
Reviving shake, inspiring move, breathing! awakening!  
Spring like redeemed captives when their bonds & bars are burst;  
Let the slave grinding at the mill, run out into the field;  
Let him look up into the heavens & laugh in the bright air;  
Let the unchained soul shut up in darkness and in sighing,  
Whose face has never seen a smile in thirty weary years,  
Rise and look out, his chains are loose, his dungeon doors are open.  
And let his wife and children return from the oppressors scourge;  
They look behind at every step & believe it is a dream,  
Singing, The Sun has left his blackness & has found a fresher morning

And the fair Moon rejoices in the clear & cloudless night;  
For empire is no more, and now the Lion & Wolf shall cease.

—William Blake (1793)

*America: a Prophecy, "Plate 6"*

## REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #36

who is the we, who is  
the they in this thing, did we or they kill the indian, not me  
my people brought here, cheap labor to exploit  
a continent for them, did we  
or they exploit it? do you  
admit complicity, say 'we have to get of Vietnam, we really should  
stop poisoning the water, etc.' look closer, look again,  
secede, declare your independence, don't accept  
a share of the guilt they want to lay on us  
MAN IS INNOCENT & BEAUTIFUL & born  
to perfect bliss they envy, heavy deeds  
make heavy hearts and to them  
life is suffering. stand clear.

—Diane DiPrima

*Revolutionary Letters Etc (1966-1978)*

## POETRY DEMANDS UNEMPLOYMENT & THE CREATION OF 1,000,000 CIRCUSES OF PURE POLYMORPHOUS LIGHT

Free creativity in the  
construction of all  
moments & events of life  
is the only poetry  
[the revolution] can  
acknowledge,  
the poetry made by all,  
the beginning of the  
revolutionary festival.  
Proletarian revolutions  
will be festivals or  
nothing, for festivity is the  
very keynote of the life they  
announce. Play is the ultimate  
principle of this festival,  
and the only rules it  
can recognize are to live  
without dead time and to  
enjoy without restraints.

## Weapons of



## Mass Distraction

## ALL NATIONS



## HALLUCINATIONS ARE YOU READY TO DIE FOR THE FUTURE OF AN ILLUSION?

If we are going to insist on maintaining a state we  
can obey, then we have to breed children who will die  
for it. So quit whining.

## Fight the empire, not its wars: A Call to Action

As we go to press, the Empire is preparing for war against Iraq, and as you read this, the war may have already commenced. Or perhaps the saber rattling will continue until the mighty technological imperial blade falls as an October surprise to enhance the electoral fortunes of the ruling party. Or, maybe the bloody, high altitude rampage against that already-destroyed land will come the day after the election, as some have suggested, or, by January of next year, or, at some other date convenient to the needs of oil and politics.

But war will come, and if not in Iraq, then in some other country whose real or fabricated transgression will act as the Empire's justification for it to go where it wants, when it wants, to what it wants to protect its kingdom of commerce. At the same time, armed conflict acts to justify the domestic national security state and permanent war economy.

But the benefits are also grossly political. At the time of WWI, the First Inter-Imperial slaughter, radical journalist Randolph Bourne stated famously, that "war is the health of the state." He correctly observed that it is an electrifying moment for the masters of war, when no one dares or even desires to question the authority of the rulers; when dissent is uttered by only the addled; when the treasury of the state can be emptied on behalf of the war industries without question; when speech is free, but no one dares use it for other than patriotic utterances; when the contradictions of class are submerged beneath the edifice of imperial government. In war, the state reigns, not only unchallenged, but adored, its trappings displayed everywhere as its songs of patriotic adulation ring throughout the land; now, rulers, subjects, and soldiers, clear-eyed and of single purpose-slay the Enemy.

Beneath it all is fear, cleverly created through manipulation of public consciousness by the rulers, who translate a contrived alarm into a rage against the Enemy or the Terrorist, and a willingness to sacrifice for the state submission to "the coldest beast of all."

But for all the chilling, self-confident preachments emanating from the imperial chieftains, their arrogance has a hol-

low ring to it, much like an Arthur Andersen accountant at WorldCom who knows that it's just a matter of time before a real look at the books will expose them for the charlatans they are. The Empire sways but never quite falls, stumbles from one debacle to the next always leaving a massacre in its wake, sometimes numbering in the millions. Its economy is a con game, jerry rigged to appear as a mountain of gold, but at its core is only a Ponzi scheme, a shell game, a bunko racket that depends on everyone insisting that the emperor is fully clothed.

The Empire in decline lurches crazily, now offering Neros and Caligulas rather than Ceasars as it had in its ascendancy, destroying an ecosystem here, a smashed national economy there (and now here), but commanding enough power and wealth to always, like a rich drunk, show up for work the next day to continue business as usual.

However, it won't go on forever; that's a safe bet. The conservative historian, Paul Kennedy, warned the leaders of the West in his 1987 book, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, that they were dangerously nearing the point of imperial overreach—a state of affairs in which ever more is expended on war, preparation for war, and the administration of a world-wide empire to the detriment of domestic plentitude. This, he cautioned, is what had brought down previous great powers such as Britain, Spain and the Dutch, and the U.S. is headed down the same dead-end road.

Although, the U.S., with its corrupt politicians, its economic system based on looting, its shredding of the ecological web of

**Although, the U.S., with its corrupt politicians, its economic system based on looting, its shredding of the ecological web of life is characteristic of empires in decline, it must be remembered that even the tail of the dragon can lay waste to more territory.**

life is characteristic of empires in decline, it must be remembered that even the tail of the dragon can lay waste to more territory. That's where we come in. Our forces may seem Lilliputian in contrast to those of the Imperial Guard, but there are a many of us, and the rot at the root of the beast is creeping slowly up towards its heart.

Its death throes may be as dangerous and deadly as ever, but as those who live in relative privilege in its belly, we have an ethical obligation to do what we can to trip the monster, to hobble its final raging, and to make sure it falls with as little damage as possible.

We need a million people in the street. We need massive civil disobedience at home and a mutiny in the armed forces. We need a general strike against the Empire's wars. Can't imagine that? Well, imagine what will happen if we don't stop them from their next season of slaughter.



—Richard Mock

# Anarchy

Anarchy is not Survivor, the X-Files, or the Expos home opener  
Anarchy is not Starbucks, the Second Cup, or double lattés at the Croissante Royale

Anarchy is not the Kyota Accords, the World Bank, or the International Monetary Fund

Anarchy is not GATT, NAFTA, UNESCO, NATO, or the European Economic Community

Anarchy is not the CBC, Télé-Québec, CTV, Global or Nightline with Ted Koppel

Anarchy is not eco-tours to Cozumel or a Club Med outside Santo Domingo

Anarchy is not Le Devoir, the Globe and Mail, and certainly not the Gazette

Anarchy is not conferred by Nobel Prize, the Governor General Award or by an Oscar

Anarchy cannot be purchased or leased with a Visa or AMEX card

Anarchy is not Viagra, Prozac, Bo-tox or Coors

Anarchy is not produced by the internal combustion engine, analog-digital cell phones, or a Palm Pilot

Anarchy is not a state subsidized health care system

Anarchy is not minimum wage laws, public transportation, or universal daycare

Anarchy is not prison, high school, university, or Lord of the Rings

Anarchy is not General Motors or Bell helicopter or Dow Chemical

It is not McDonald's fries, KFC buckets, or 2 liter bottles of Pepsi

Anarchy is not child support payments, unemployment insurance, or BS

Anarchy is not spiked hair, facial tattoos, or a slogan painted on a up-turned camera truck

Anarchy is not a gas mask, a helmet, or a bottle of baby oil

Anarchy is not pepper spray, water cannons, the School of the Americas, truncheons, or F-16s

Anarchy is not weddings in white, funerals in black, or registrations of live birth

Anarchy is not issued with a driver's license or a passport

Anarchy is not Oedipus, one man one vote, or a brick through the window of your local Prada outlet store

Anarchy is not found in Board of Directors shareholder agreements or in on-line derivative trading

Anarchy cannot be induced through diet, not smoking or clean-living

Anarchy is not dependent upon hand-outs from the frightened or the guilty

Anarchy is not the despotic state, or a revolutionary new state

It is a state-of-being

Anarchy is an escape from the order of the State, and Mommy and Daddy

Anarchy is an escape from the tyranny of "I am"  
Anarchy is release from the words that make us blind

Anarchy is a continual unleashing of desire that we have depressed, and compressed, and repressed

Anarchy is the impossible burden of learning everything again and again

Anarchy is the birthing in blood and cries of a new world both inside and out

Anarchy is the beauty and terror of all the unknown

Anarchy is the acceptance of complete responsibility for everything

Anarchy can only start at home

Anarchy is the here and now

Anarchy is the common and the communal and the consensual

Anarchy is the recognition of the necessary

Anarchy is the illumination of souls

Anarchy is the courage to live all the lives we desire together.

—Fortner Anderson (2002)



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Police  
Attack  
Protests  
in  
Portland

# We are not the enemy

by William Rivers Pitt ([www.truthout.org](http://www.truthout.org))

The image is chilling. A middle-aged woman, plainly dressed, with a puff of auburn hair, is clutched in a hammer-lock by a Portland police officer dressed in full riot gear. His riot baton is jammed high under her chin. Around her, three more armor-clad police officers swarm in, face-masks down. The woman's face is contorted in terror. In her hand is a sign protesting George W. Bush.

This was the scene on the streets of Portland, OR, on the evening of August 22nd as captured by a photographer for the Associated Press. Thousands of peaceful protesters had descended upon the Hilton Hotel where Mr. Bush was attending a political fundraiser for Senator Gordon Smith. They held signs reading, "Drop Bush, not Bombs," and other similar slogans. Among the protesters were pregnant women, parents with infants and small children, elderly citizens, and citizens in wheelchairs.

According to a report by CBS News, the protest became unruly when some of the fundraiser attendees were "jostled" as they moved through the crowd towards the entrance to the hotel. At that point, the riot police swarmed in, swinging clubs and dousing the crowd with pepper spray. Rubber bullets were also fired into the crowd, and snipers were seen on the roofs surrounding the scene. The protesters responded by hammering on the hoods of police cars and screaming, "We are not the enemy!"

A man named Randy, who attended the protest, reports the sequence of events as follows:

"I was between 5th and 6th on the sidewalk. Maybe the ones in front were warned to move, but I didn't hear any warning. It had been a peaceful protest. Suddenly the police came forward spraying pepper spray. A man nearby with an infant in a backpack got hit real good. The baby's face was so red I thought it had quit breathing. From the other direction came cop cars through the crowd and rubber bullets were fired at those closest to the cars. I kept retreating but the cops kept spraying. Lots of people were sprayed, including the cameraman from Channel 2 KATU."

Other eyewitness accounts from the streets of Portland similarly describe what appears to have been a terrifyingly violent response from the police to a peaceful protest by assembled American citizens.

This is a profoundly disturbing turn of events. Mr. Bush is protested wherever he goes these days, and the crowds which attend them are growing. These are not black-clad anarchists kicking in windows, however. The woman who was attacked

by the police looked as ordinary as any small-town librarian, and anarchists are smart enough to leave their children at home if there is a riot in the offing. The streets of Portland were filled on August 22nd by average American citizens seeking to inform the President of their disfavor regarding the manner in which he is governing their country. They were rewarded with the business end of a billy club, a face-full of pepper spray, and the jarring impact of a rubber bullet.

If America needed one more example of the cancer that has been chewing through the guts of our most basic freedoms since Mr. Bush assumed office, they can look to Portland. The right to freely assemble and petition the government for a redress of grievances has been rescinded at the point of a gun.

The imperative is clear. Such violence by the authorities cannot go unchallenged. The next time Mr. Bush appears in public, there must be even more concerned Americans to greet him. They must face the baton and the pepper spray, they must stare into the shielded faces of the police, and they must stand in non-violent disobedience of the idea that they are not allowed to be there. The men and women who faced the brunt of police fury in Portland are to be lauded as American patriots, and their actions must be duplicated by us all. The groups which organized this protest, and the ones to come, deserve our praise.

The media, which spent much of the evening reporting that only a few hundred protesters were in attendance, must be browbeaten into reporting the facts from both sides - from the police, who reportedly detained people like the woman in the picture "for their own safety," and from the protesters who took a savage beating for daring to stand against Mr. Bush. If the battle of Portland is allowed to cast even more fear into the hearts and minds of Americans, we have lost yet another swath of freedoms. Stand and be counted if you can.

The whole world is watching.  
Saturday, 24 August, 2002

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**Above all, continue to Gather, in twos-ees and three-sees, in tens of thousands. Continue to spread the ideals of a multi-cultural caring and sharing world. That's the hope and the vision. It always has been since the dawn of human society—that we people will learn to live in peace with each other.**

**It isn't going to come from the governments and the corporations. It's going to come from people, young and old, learning how to make do together, and the Gatherings are one way that people can learn and have that experience. Civilization is going to have to make a choice between a New World Order and a New World Culture.** —Garrick Beck (son of Julian Beck & Judith Malina), May 2002, just before "doing time" for challenging US Forest Service regulations at the 2001 Rainbow Gathering

# PHANTOMS OF LOST LIBERTY

by Don La Coss

Down the street, there's a park about half the size of a city block. Tucked away in the corner is a four-foot granite monument inscribed with the Ten Commandments, the core credo of a 3,000-year-old eastern Mediterranean cult started by sun-stroked nomads.

For the last year, that monument has been at the center of controversy because of a lawsuit to get it removed from the park. According to plaintiffs, its presence violates the supposed guarantee of governmental neutrality in matters of mythology. But the loud God-fearing folk of this town have mobilized to "save" the Ten Commandments on the grounds that only good can come from having these writings on permanent display in the public arena, presumably for the same reasons given by those who thought that posting the Ten Commandments in public schools would magically prevent another Columbine High School-style outburst of murderous alienation and rage.

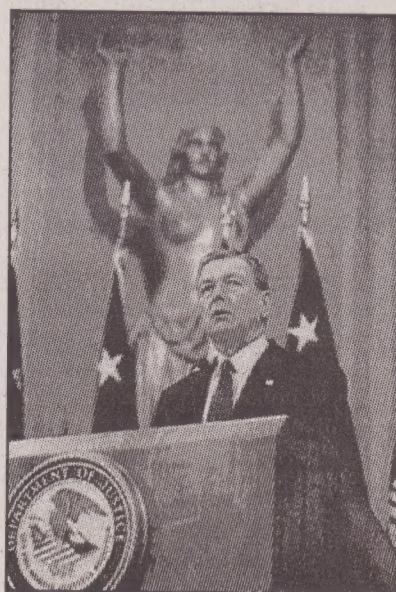
One of the more wretched outgrowths of the fanaticism to guard against the removal of the granite slabs from the park has been the proliferation of small, cheap, blue-and-white plastic lawn signs printed with an oddly-abridged version of the Ten Commandments. These ornaments are stuck in front of houses all over town, and they are in such great demand that there are reports of them being stolen from front lawns, apparently by true believers who don't know that covetousness and theft are expressly prohibited by their precious Commandments. These lawn ornaments are produced and sold by a local group called "Crossfire," an evocative name that conjures up the burning crucifixes of the Ku Klux Klan or a tactic for murder taught at army rifle ranges and police academies. Crossfire's executive director has said that the monument should stay in the park because "this nation was founded on a Judeo-Christian ethic. I don't think we should have to make an apology for that. It has served us well."

If "us" applies to people just like the executive director of Crossfire—white, middle-class, Christian patriarchs who get off on moralizing pedantry—then, indeed, his kind have been well-served by this nation-founding "Judeo-Christian ethic."

Consider the success of Attorney-General John Ashcroft. After losing his senatorial seat in 2000 to a three week-old corpse, Ashcroft was rescued from oblivion to run the Justice Department in order to appease the rabidly religious white reactionaries who had supported Bush. Ashcroft is much beloved by the hard Right because he delights in the death penalty and is horrified by women's reproductive rights, dancing, gays, and lesbians. He is also a fervent Assemblies of God Pentecostal Christian, a sect that believes in faith healing, demonic possession, and "speaking in tongues" (during church

services, people flop down on the floor and roll around while jabbering in jumbled phrases said to be the ancient language of angels). His religion also insists upon the reality of Biblical prophesy, which might explain why Ashcroft had Judge Clarence Thomas anoint his forehead with Crisco oil in the name of his god like some Old Testament warlord, predestined by divine will. In an official conference room at the Justice Department, Ashcroft thinks he is fulfilling his heavenly mandate by asking his employees to join him in prayer, daily Bible study, and the singing of nationalist hymns that he composed.

Recently, Ashcroft ordered burqas for a pair of twelve-foot aluminum statues (the bare-breasted Spirit of Justice and the loin-clothed Majesty of Law) in the lobby of the Justice Department because "he didn't like being photographed in front of them." Corporate media reported this half-jokingly as Ashcroft's



uptight prudishness, just as the newspapers around here spin the Ten Commandment monument story as an example of "religious intolerance" on the part of the atheists who initiated the lawsuit.

But the shrouding of the Spirit of Justice is not just priggishness wrought by Ashcroft's bizarre religious predilections—it is a grave symptom entirely consistent with his lust to do what he thinks his

god wants: erect a theocratic National Security State by dismantling civil liberties.

Likewise, the superstitious panic over getting the Ten Commandments monument out of a city park is not a fight to protect the right to freedom of religion from atheist lawsuits, but it is actually about abolishing the fundamental human right to freedom from religion.

Insatiable authoritarian fantasies of obedience, pathological piety, and compulsory patriotism have clearly been "served well" by the "Judeo-Christian ethic" that the director of Crossfire has been speaking about. Testifying before a senate committee in December 2001, Ayatollah Ashcroft warned that "those who scare peace-loving people with phantoms of lost liberty...only aid terrorists, for they erode our national unity and diminish our resolve." It is the concept of "God" deployed by the most powerful policeman in the U.S. that is the real "phantom" of "lost liberty." "God" is a mirage that will always be most visible when liberty is being lost.

—La Crosse, Wisconsin 2002

# Anarchist Summer Camp in Kansas

report by Witch Hazel

On June 6-9, this summer's **North American Anarchist Gathering** (NAAG) outside Lawrence, Kansas provided quite a contrast to the last one held in August 2000 during the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles, amid one of the most intense police security operations in recent history.

Not only was the Kansas gathering more relaxed since there was no mass protest going on, but it was held at a state park rather than in an urban warehouse, and instead of a concrete toxic riverbed running behind the place, a huge recreational lake offered constant relief from the scorching Midwest sun.

Despite having to pay for parking, the group camping area was free. The road leading into the camp passed by dozens of RVs and picnicking vacationers, but once inside the area set aside for the gathering, it took on the quality of a temporary autonomous zone—like some kind of anarchist summer camp. Workshops and discussions were held in large rented circus tents (paid for by funds raised at a benefit held beforehand, "The Art of Revolution," featuring art donated from around the country).

Electrical outlets from the campsite bathroom powered a film festival. An open mic one night featured a constant flow of spoken word, poetry, and songs of resistance. A huge trampoline standing in the middle of the field was constantly in use throughout the gathering.

Interwoven with all the fun and games were serious political workshops, practical skill-sharing, and thoughtful discussions on personal and community dynamics. Perhaps the most memorable theme permeating both informal and formal discussions concerned fostering an authentic and functional sense of community among anarchists or strengthening solidarity on interpersonal levels as well as on political ones.

Several discussions or workshops addressed both personal and political solidarity: Dealing with sexual abuse in a non-hierarchical way; supporting each other through mental illness; men fighting patriarchy; responding to death in your collective (presented by Detroit's Trumbullplex crew who had recently lost

two friends in a car accident); and being allies to trans, mothers, and other marginalized groups within our movements. Chris Plummer from Texas, who was recently released from a nine year prison sentence for torching a neo-Nazi organizing center, addressed the gathering about the importance of political prisoner support.

There were so many opportunities for historic, practical, and theoretical explorations, and the Lawrence organizers did a great job drawing out curious, would-be anarchists from a region that has seen little anarchist activity. It was refreshing to see the practical emphasized at NAAG. Building from the PAZ (permanent autonomous zones) conference in Louisville last Fall, there is a surge of interest in practical skills in anarchist circles.

Workshops offered at NAAG included DIY (do it yourself) women's health, food preservation, permaculture, songwriting (in which we composed a short tune about the parasitic reporters at the conference, comparing them to blood-thirsty ticks), medic trainings, psychiatric oppression, and radical schooling.

And, of course, there was the perpetual DIY swimming, playing with the kids, playing soccer, and playing music. Play provides a crucial element to any anarchist gathering.

On the theoretical side, some workshops that stood out included a presentation by Jared James from his new book, *Getting Free*, about a blueprint for a new society; a formal debate on violence vs. nonviolence (yeah, the same ole shit, but for newbies it was good); green anarchy and primitivism, and an impressive presentation on "post-Left Anarchism" by *Anarchy* editor, Jason McQuinn. ([http://www.anarchymag.org/48/after\\_leftism.html](http://www.anarchymag.org/48/after_leftism.html))

Generally speaking, the NAAG was a success. For many who attended, it was a social opportunity to meet old friends and

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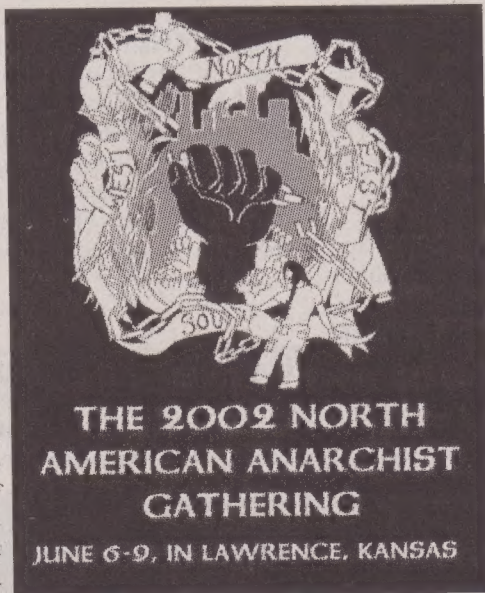
**Interwoven with all the fun and games were serious political workshops, practical skill-sharing, and thoughtful discussions on personal and community dynamics.**

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make new ones. For others, it was a chance to rekindle our anarchist embers. For whatever reason people came, gatherings are essential to celebrate our powerful yet misunderstood sets of values and beliefs.

So, on to NAAG 2003!!! Who's hosting it? Interested local collectives should check out the NAAG web site: [www.prague-index.org/naag](http://www.prague-index.org/naag).

**Going to a gathering or demo?**  
**Write a report of 800 words or less and send it to [fifthstatenewspaper@yahoo.com](mailto:fifthstatenewspaper@yahoo.com)**



# Plan Z builds bridges in Tennessee by Maxzine

**P**lan Z: A Strategy Conference for Radical Wimmin and Trannies rolled into our radical queer community, IDA, this past June. ("Tranny," by the way, is a common, chosen term for the transgendered.) The week-long gathering brought together activists from around the country and beyond to the secluded woods of Tennessee. We were happy to open up our home and gardens to enthusiastic agents of social change.

From the beginning, there was uncertainty about what exactly to expect. The conference organizers specifically decided to make the event open by invitation only. Biological men (or "bio boys," as we came to be called) were only invited to participate in some of the activities. Plan Z's goals included developing and planning strategies for radical activism in an environment where wimmin and gender queers would not have to deal with dominating men (who are, unfortunately, all-too common, even in anti-authoritarian circles).

Some of the organizers arrived more than a month early and quickly created a long list of projects they intended to initiate and complete before the influx of the larger group. They wanted to dig new shitters, construct hand-washing stations, build handrails for our staircases, clear meeting spaces in the woods, and build an accessible foot bridge across our creek, among other things. They were mostly city folk, not quite prepared for the relatively slow pace in rural Tennessee, the intense Southern sun, and the multitudes of blood-sucking chiggers, no-see-ums, and other biting insects.

Some of the projects seemed do-able, while others were daunting. The bridge became a metaphor for the gaps to be crossed before and during the conference. None of the group had ever taken on such a project, which required clearing massive thorny vines, digging huge holes for concrete piers, felling large trees, and then hauling them to the site. Thrown in were lessons with a chainsaw (that nasty gas-guzzling tool that can cause serious injury if things go wrong) and numerous meetings to figure it all out. It was a scenario ripe for tensions and frustration. There was doubt, but exhaustive efforts birthed a gorgeous cedar bridge, complete with ramps on both sides.

Just as the bridge was completed, about 75 wimmin and trannies arrived with tents and ambition. We were gathered together to challenge the eternal war of Bush, Plan Colombia, and the prison-industrial complex, and to create alternatives. Some of the bio-boys in the area were upset and disappointed at being excluded from some of the conference. I felt encouraged by hosting a partially separatist gathering because of the inspiration provided by wimmin and trannies meeting together in what was a safe space for them.

Besides, I was busy helping to plot a day of cooking and cleaning in the kitchen to give the Plan Z folks a chance to have workshops without having to also cook and clean. Our goal with the meals was to shower the attendees with exquisite food (some of it from our gardens, some of it homemade—like fresh baked bagels and tempeh) and a big dose of faerie irreverence

(we served each meal in different places and new outfits). Our efforts had a charming effect and we were later invited to participate in all of the conference workshops.

This included a series of performances where the conference organizers put on a production of "Bridge: The Musical" and we performed a satirical piece about the conference. Plan Z concluded with a big dance party, and there were literally dozens of otherwise butch wimmin seeking out fae men to borrow drag and, gasp, makeup from. A bridge had been gapped.

In the end, Plan Z was a great success for drawing together various activists from around the country and forging new relationships. While the world situation seems bleak indeed, gatherings of activists can fill us with hope. The most amazing result was the blending of genders and identity. While much of gender is certainly a social construct, it was heartening to bring together so many of us who have felt alienated and marginalized as cross-gender outlaws in a conformist society.

**For more information about IDA Community or the revolutionary bicycle tour & dinner theater contact Maxzine at 615 597 4409 or maxzine69@yahoo.com**



# Anti-Electoralism and William Morris: Some Revolutionary History

By Wayne Price

It is generally a waste of time to argue with individuals about their voting or not voting. Among tens of thousands, one vote either way makes no difference (even when it gets counted).

The question is what large social forces should do in elections. Such forces include the labor unions, the African-American communities, Latino communities, the organized feminist movement, Gay and Lesbian organizations, organized environmentalists, and the network of anti-globalization/anti-corporate activists.

Such groups involve very large numbers. They include the "core constituencies" of the Democratic Party, which would collapse without their support. Conservatives sneer at them as "special interests," but potentially they represent the vast majority (working people, women, people who want to breathe clean air).

The historical position of anarchists and other anti-authoritarian socialists has been that such forces should not participate in elections. In Kropotkin's words, "Anarchists . . . do not seek to constitute, and invite the workingmen [sic] not to constitute, political parties in the parliaments . . . They have endeavored to . . . induce [labor] unions to a direct struggle against capital, without placing their faith in parliamentary legislation."

The opposite approach was raised by Karl Marx and his followers. Marx proposed a resolution to the First International, "The working class cannot act, as a class, except by constituting itself into a political party, distinct from, and opposed to, all old parties formed by the propertied classes."

With such parties, "Universal suffrage . . . will . . . be transformed from the instrument of fraud that it has been up till now into an instrument of emancipation." This (unlikely) strategy was the main political issue in the conflict between the Marxists and anarchists which split the First International. When the Second (or Socialist) International was formed, its leaders physically threw out the anarchists and insisted that only pro-electoralists could be members.

Marx's pro-electoral arguments did not immediately sweep all before them; it took a while before they became dominant even among non-anarchist socialists. There was an anti-electoral minority which correctly predicted the evolution of the electoral parties.

A special example was the British poet and artist, William

Morris. He became a socialist (or, as he liked to call himself, a communist) at the age of 50 in the late 1880s. He knew both Kropotkin and Engels. What he meant by "socialism" or "communism" had an anti-authoritarian and anti-statist content.

Hal Draper, the Marxist, calls Morris, "the leading personality of revolutionary socialism of that period . . . Morris's writings on socialism breathe from every pore the spirit of Socialism-from-Below." For various reasons, Morris did not regard himself as an anarchist, but he allied himself with the anarchists in his organization to fight the Marxists (associates of Engels) over the issue of participating in elections and parliament. His writings on the subject are unusually prescient.

His views on elections began with what he learned from Marx: that there is an irreconcilable conflict between the capitalist class and the working class. This is not to deny other conflicts involving race, gender, or the ecology. But a multidimensional analysis of authoritarianism does not require abandoning an analysis of class conflict.

As Morris learned from Marx, the state serves the ruling boss class; it is on their side of the class line. We can add that the state is also essential to maintaining the patriarchy, white supremacy, and other forms of oppression. While the state may grant reforms when under pressure, it cannot be used to create a new and better society.

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**The question is what large social  
forces should do in elections.  
The historical position of anarchists . . .  
has been that such forces should not  
participate in elections.**

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In his 1871 *The Civil War in France*, Marx famously concluded, "The working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes." The centralized, bureaucratic-military, structure of the state is

not capable of organizing a free society. That requires a wholly different sort of structure, a federation of workplace and neighborhood councils, with directly recallable representatives, a commune-like (or "soviet") non-state. Given the nature of the patriarchal-capitalist state, there is no "parliamentary road to socialism" (as it used to be called). If anti-authoritarian socialism is the necessary goal, and if elections to the U.S. government are the means, then you can't get there from here.

Morris thought that to say, "Elect our socialist party and we will create a new, socialist society" could only be a lie. Of course it is possible to disagree with Morris and other anti-electoralists. Most people do.

But I do not see how it is possible to believe both (1) that the existing state cannot be used to create a freer, cooperative, society, and (2) that the use of elections by workers' parties would

lead to "emancipation." I have looked through the works of Marx and Engels to find out just how they squared these conceptions. I have been unable to find any explanation or any explicit electoral strategy.

### Policy of Abstention

As he explains in his 1887 *The Policy of Abstention*, William Morris felt that "It is necessary to keep the two camps of labor and monopoly [capitalism] as distinct as possible. . . Everything that tends to weaken that opposition, to confuse it, weakens the popular force, and gives a new lease of life to the reaction. . . If our own people are forming part of parliament, the instruments of the enemy, they are helping to make the very laws we will not obey. Where is the enemy then?"

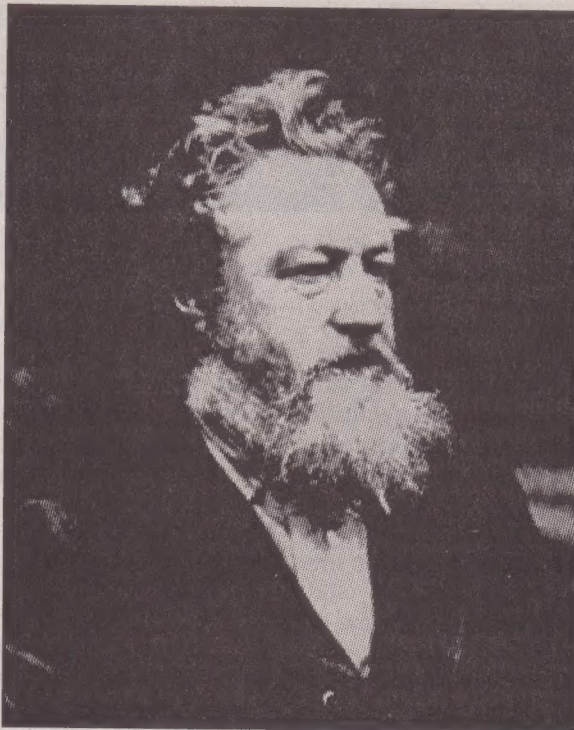
Morris argued that a socialist party, if it seriously wants to get elected, would have to advocate something besides "socialism;" it would have to advocate some sort of lesser, intermediate, demands. Except in revolutionary periods, most people are not yet in favor of socialism. So if the party wants to elect members, then it must modify its socialist program.

"They will then have to put forward a program of reforms deduced from the principles of socialism. . . They will necessarily have to appeal for support (i.e., votes) to a great number of people who are not convinced socialists, and their program of reforms will be the bait to catch these votes; and to the ordinary voter it will be this bait which will be the matter of interest, and not the principle. . ."

It will be impossible to honestly tell the voters and recruits that these reforms are only bait and not the real program. Therefore, "the socialist members when they get into parliament will represent a heterogeneous body of opinion, ultra-radical, democratic, discontented non-politicals, rather than a body of socialists, and it will be their opinions and prejudices that will sway the actions of the members in parliament."

In practice, as the socialists have success with their reform demands, these will be adopted by the liberals, leaving the socialists without anything special to say. Or the socialists will themselves dissolve into the liberals (the "progressive democratic party"). Even in the unlikely event that the reform socialists did by "cumulative reforms manage to bring us to the crisis of revolution. . . they would then have to govern a people who had rather been ignorantly betrayed into socialism then have learned to accept it as an understood necessity. . ."

Instead, he proposed to expand the scope of the existing labor



William Morris, anti-authoritarian socialist & artist

**If our own people are forming part of parliament, the instruments of the enemy, they are helping to make the very laws we will not obey. Where is the enemy then?—William Morris**

unions to form widely organized labor combinations which would stand opposite parliament as an alternate power (note that Morris was not against working in unions or in other limited struggles). By strikes, boycotts, and other mass actions, the power of the workers would oppose that of the capitalists organized in parliament. His proposals sound remarkably like a prediction of the popular committees which have burst out in every mass revolution from the 1917 Russian revolution on.

It has been argued that the ill effects Morris predicted from socialist electoralism could be avoided by a revolutionary party which would openly argue for socialist revolution and maintain an internal discipline so that their electoral agents can be controlled by the party leadership to keep advocating socialism. In fact, this was the argument of Lenin against the anti-electoralists of his day.

Perhaps this is possible for a very brief period in a revolutionary situation—and Morris was open to this. But realistically, a party cannot maintain a revolutionary electoral posture for election after election, year after year, and decade after decade. The pressure to adapt to the

low level of the voters' consciousness on the one hand, and to the nature of the electoral (parliamentary) system on the other, must corrupt the socialist party.

An electoral strategy means persuading the working people to elect leaders who will be political for them, people who will act in congress (parliament, whatever) in their place, as their representatives. Of his plan for labor councils, Morris said, "The organization I am thinking of would have a serious point of difference from any that could be formed as a part of a parliamentary plan of action: its aim would be to act directly, whatever was done in it would be done by the people themselves. . ."

### His prediction is our history

What was a prediction in Morris' day has become history in ours. From the beginning, electoralists united both revolutionists and reformists behind their approach—both those who wanted electoral parties in order to get to a revolution and those who wanted electoral parties in order to prevent a revolution.

The European Social Democratic parties became mere electoral machines. By now, they have so degenerated that they no longer claim to be for a new kind of society at all; they merely claim to be liberal pro-capitalist parties. They are presently in the governments of most of the Western European countries.

They all supported the bombing of Serbia and of Afghanistan, the U.S. support for Israel, and U.S. preparation for other wars (with various quibbles here and there). The Communist parties in Western Europe also became no more than electoral machines. If, as Engels often quoted, "The proof of the pudding is in the eating," then electoralism should be decidedly discredited.

The most recent awful example of electoralism is that of the German Green party. It was founded as the unparty, the anti-party party, a virtually anarchist party, with rotating representatives and a program which could not be granted by industrial capitalism. In a couple of decades, the Greens' elected representatives "realistically" adapted to the German parliament. Now, in coalition with the Social Democratic party, their leader Fischer is the German foreign minister. They support NATO and its current wars. This should not give us confidence in those U.S. activists who are trying to follow the same model by building a U.S. Green party.

This history has a message. The problems of our society will not be solved by making the Democratic party more liberal nor by replacing the Democrats with a new party. They will not be helped by a new, pro-capitalist party (such as the Nader/Greens effort) nor by a union-based party with a pro-capitalist program (as advocated by the leaders of the Labor Party movement). Not even by a party with an openly anarchist or socialist program. The whole electoral approach is unworkable.

Morris was perfectly aware that there was a real difference between liberal politicians and conservatives. Yet he also knew that the lesser evil was still an evil. It is not that the liberals are the same as the reactionaries; it is that the lesser evils cannot be effective in fighting the reactionary right. This can be demonstrated by the steady move of U.S. politics to the right, as the lesser-evil Democrats keep on following the lead of the Republicans. What oppressed people need the most is not lesser-evil presidents or judges but militant and independent movements of workers, women, African-Americans, and everyone with grievances against this system.

This is the rulers' state, the organization of oppression in all its aspects. The oppressed do not gain by participating in it. Elections run on rivers of cash (legal and illegal, soft and hard)—and no "campaign finance reform" will change that.

Working people, oppressed "minorities," and the poor do not have such funds. What we have is numbers and the possibility of organizing ourselves. Instead of organizing to support our enemies, the oppressed should be organizing people into anti-hierarchical unions and other popular collectives, building demonstrations, engaging in civil disobedience/strikes/boycotts/direct actions, and in general, raising hell.

The popular forces have won their biggest gains by non-electoral direct struggle. This includes the mass strikes of the 1930s, with their factory sit-ins and clashes with the National Guard, which won the unions the right to exist. Also, the mass civil disobedience of the Civil Rights and Black Liberation movements including broke legal segregation in the South and won federal anti-discrimination laws. From the anti-war movement of the 1960s to the global justice demonstrations of today, the struggle against military and economic imperialism has taken place in the streets, not in Congress.

This does not mean that anarchists should be neutral when oppressed people demand the right to vote. Likewise, if some radicals vote defensively, we need not lecture them about this decision as long as it is not seen as a substitute for direct action. On the contrary, we should support this both because 1) it is what people want and have a right to, and 2) the more "democratic" the country is—although still really run by a ruling class minority—the easier it is for people to organize and use free speech to fight the system.

Voting rights for the oppressed became an issue again at the end of the last presidential election. The way in which African-Americans in particular were denied the right to vote and be counted in Florida exposed the reality of capitalist "democracy." Black people were furious. But no one organized this fury into mass marches and protests—not even the Democrats who were being cheated out of a political plum. They preferred to lose rather than to mobilize the Southern Black population! The Green party too did nothing, chained to their electoral strategy. Hopefully, if there had been an uprising in Florida, anarchists would have participated in mass demonstrations and direct actions around the election fraud.

We live in a society of oppression and of a galloping destruction of the balance of nature. It is past time for people to say that we will no longer participate in our rulers' shell games.

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"Milosevic" - Richard Mock

## The Sad Truth Milosevic "Crucified": Counter-Spin as Useful Idiocy

by David Watson

**S**lobodan Milosevic has been at The Hague for a little more than a year, the first head of state to face a war crimes tribunal since the crime of genocide was codified in the UN Charter. The former autocrat stands accused of sixty-six accounts of war crimes, including ethnic cleansing in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosova; the murder of civilians and prisoners; and genocide in Bosnia.

Milosevic has spent much of his time engaged in bluster against the West for the benefit of his audience in Serbia. He is being "crucified," he says, and the accusations are all lies, part of a

Western "Nazi" conspiracy to destroy socialist Yugoslavia. If anything remotely similar to these crimes occurred, he insists, he had nothing to do with it. Milosevic cavils about details, displays a flamboyant indifference to the suffering described, and coldly mocks witnesses, many of them victims of his storm troopers during the planned pogrom against the Albanian Kosovars in 1999.<sup>1</sup>

The catastrophe in the former Yugoslavia, Milosevic contends, is nothing but part of a "strategic concept in realizing global control" by the West, which is "subjugating countries throughout the world [and] causing ... conflicts between the Slav and Muslim

nations in the hope that they will kill each other or at least weaken each other so much that control may be established over them in a weakened state."<sup>2</sup> Though Milosevic's claim that the Western powers caused Slavs and Muslims to kill one another is something akin to a German Nazi's claiming that the West caused Germans and Polish Jews to kill each other, there is obviously an iota of truth in his denunciations of Western domination. As an old folklore reminds us, the Devil wraps his lies in truths all the more to mislead.

Nevertheless, gradually and inexorably, the evidence is mounting against him.<sup>3</sup> As Norman Cigar (who has collected evidence on war crimes in the former Yugoslavia since the mid-1990s) and Paul Williams have written, there is a substantial body of evidence in the public domain alone to support the indictment of Milosevic "on charges of genocide, crimes against humanity, violation of the laws and customs of war, and grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 1949." Milosevic was not only aware of the crimes of his underlings, he was "extensively involved, providing both support and direction" to the campaigns, and "knew and approved of the support the agencies under his control were providing" to the various military formations carrying out his grisly enterprise on the ground.<sup>4</sup>

The prosecution is working at some disadvantage, largely without the benefit of critical internal documents—which Serbia's current government has proved unwilling to provide for reasons that should be obvious. The Court has also excluded much of the forensic information on massacres, gathered soon after the 1999 war, even though such testimony has been allowed in other tribunals.<sup>5</sup> Thus, it may not be possible to get Milosevic's fingerprints on the proverbial smoking gun. But even if the prosecutors were to mishandle the case completely (and there is some difference of opinion as to whether they are doing an adequate job), or if they were to get their conviction in something less than completely clear circumstances, such outcomes would hardly suggest Milosevic's innocence. Anyone who closely observed the four wars Milosevic ignited and conducted had to be well aware of his intimate relationship with crimes of the Yugoslav army, police and paramilitary gangs like those of Vojislav Seselj and Zeljko Raznjatovic, known as Arkan (whom Milosevic apparently had rubbed out after the 1999 war to prevent his former minion from providing evidence against him). Milosevic's command relationship with the brutal ethno-fascist mini-states that did his dirty work—the now defunct Krajina Serb "republic" and the still extant product of ethnic cleansing and mass murder, the Bosnian Serb entity—should also be obvious.<sup>6</sup>

Milosevic plays well in Serbia. That this mass murderer, who is arguably more responsible than any other single individual for the bloody wars of Yugoslav dissolution, can now pose as a victim of the New World Order and be taken seriously by large numbers of Serbs back home is sad testimony to the fascist mass psychology of victimology, projection and denial under which Serbia languishes. Such delusion not only exemplifies the present post-war slough (or is this only another interwar phase?) that has seized Serbia, where one can easily buy calendars and posters celebrating war criminals Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic; it has festered to one degree or another since the early days of the Yugoslav meltdown, when masses of Serbs, succumbing to nationalist demagoguery, ordained their new Tsar Lazar to power in the late 1980s to forge a Greater Serbia, and then threw flowers

at the tanks heading off to pulverize multiethnic Vukovar, just inside Croatia, in 1991.

### Four legs good; two legs bad

Anyone outside the nationalist thrall in Serbia would have to be an idiot to take Milosevic's prevarications seriously, but in the West there are, to borrow Lenin's memorable phrase, plenty of useful idiots whose four-legs-good-two-legs-bad oppositionism I have previously described in these pages.<sup>7</sup> This band includes leftists who deny the existence of Serbian killing camps in Bosnia or even the massacre at Srebrenica, and an International Committee to Defend Slobodan Milosevic, a red-brown front of leftists and Serb ethno-nationalists that, perhaps, will also take up the cases of Mladic and Karadzic, if they are ever apprehended.

There have been such weird moments in the past. One is reminded of the Communist Party line defending Hitler's Germany against that Old World Order during the Hitler-Stalin Pact, and vilifying the proletarian uprising in 1956 in Hungary in which a handful of fascists may have also gotten their licks in. There were also the fossils who defended the crushing of Czechoslovakia's attempt to create a socialism with a human face in 1968, and maoist

cultists who defended Pol Pot and the murderous gangsters of the Peruvian Shining Path. This kind of reflexive pseudo-opposition is not exclusively a stalinist phenomenon; not too long ago certain ultra-lefts in France started out arguing that there was no difference between the crimes committed by Western democracies and those committed

by the fascist powers and ended up insisting that a statement denying the Nazi genocide altogether deserved equal consideration with the assertion that the camps existed.<sup>8</sup>

Radicals know too well that the US government lies, and that the media—particularly television—generally broadcast the lies as received truths. And they know that when imperialist ideologues crow about defending civilization they are for the most part sanctimoniously and venally doing so to cover up the vast crimes of the empire itself.

On the other hand, if the imperialist powers or *The New York Times* or anyone else cites, say, gravity as the reason why objects fall to earth, it would be notable foolishness, as well as an extraordinary waste of time, to contest this part of the dominant paradigm. And yet some seem intent on doing something like that. This is the case of the *Alternative Press Review*—which is published and edited by anarchists, no less, and which prides itself on being "Your Guide Beyond the Mainstream"—in printing the "censored" (their word) "Statement of Slobodan Milosevic on The Illegitimacy of the Hague Tribunal" in their Spring 2002 issue.

It is not worth addressing every detail of the tangle of ignorance and manipulation in this spread, from its befuddled introduction, to Milosevic's maledictions, to an accompanying piece of agitprop by some outfit calling itself "The World Socialist Website"; it is a blithering mess. But for openers, the idea that Milosevic has been censored is inane; his statement is available on the internet and has been covered widely, even broadcast in part on CNN. Milosevic makes good media; what has been far less reported is the detailed testimony of his victims, the actual terms of the war crimes conventions, or the complex workings of the tribunal itself. If the mainstream has demurred from printing Milosevic's rantings in their entirety or from giving him his own talk show (after all, they already have enough right-wing talk show

## Why did the anarchist editors of the *Alternative Press Review* publish autocrat and mass murderer Slobodan Milosevic?

## According to *The Alternative Press Review*, compared to Central America the pogrom against the Albanian Kosovars was a "parking lot scuffle."

hosts), many Balkan info publications and even some mainstream European and American publications have done a better, more nuanced and more realistic job than APR in apprising their readers of the issue.

Despite some thought-provoking and useful contributions to alternative publishing (including, I should say in the interest of disclosure, my articles and articles by other FE writers, and including as well, several articles in the very same issue on the wars in Colombia and Afghanistan, the sanctions against Iraq, and other matters), the APR has been dismal on the issue of the Balkans. They have given ample space to the stalinist hack and Milosevic apologist Michael Parenti, and printed one of the more cheerfully inhumane articles about the 1999 war I have seen. In this execrable piece in the Spring/Summer 1999 issue, "Twenty Reasons Why NATO's War Sucks," authors Mark Aims and Matt Taibbi comment that in comparison with Central America, etc., the pogrom against the Albanian Kosovars was a "parking lot scuffle." They explain, "The Serbs were behaving with relative restraint in Kosovo last year." In this case "relative restraint" meant attacking villages and carrying out massacres, driving some three hundred thousand people out of their homes and into the hills, or out of the country altogether. This massive violence occurred in the summer of 1998, after a decade of fierce apartheid repression against the nonviolent resistance of the Albanian Kosovars, and well before Rambouillet.

Citing British Defense Minister George Robertson's perfectly reasonable statement in 1999 that the West was "confronting a regime ... intent on genocide," Aims and Taibbi sneer, "Just so we don't forget, 'genocide' means to kill everyone in a race"—which would mean that even the genocides against the Jews, East Timorese and American Indians wouldn't qualify. Comparisons of Hitler and Milosevic, they insist, "insult the public's intelligence," since "Hitler killed six million Jews; he made lampshades out of little children; he tried to take over the whole world. Milosevic is a monster, but he's not close to a record like that. Comparing Milosevic to Hitler proves that the US government no longer trusts its citizens to make real moral distinctions."

Having been in a few parking lot scuffles myself, I find their comparison odious. Apparently, these complacent fellows didn't even notice that the distinctions they were making were not moral or qualitative but rather merely proportional and quantitative. Milosevic and his legions may not take first place in a competition with the Guatemalan and Salvadoran juntas, and they weren't exactly Hitler, but how bad did they have to be to make the club? Such crude and derisive sophistry reflects the notorious incapacity of shallow ideologues to identify with or even to recognize the authentic suffering of real human beings.

### An age of institutionalized injustice

It was disappointing to see that FE collaborator (and APR contributing editor) Allan Antliff had written the introduction to Milosevic.<sup>9</sup> Antliff (and with him presumably APR editors Jason McQuinn, Chuck Munson and Tom Wheeler) agrees with the premise of the tribunal that, as he begins in his introduction, Milosevic "engaged in numerous crimes of war and genocide." One can only wonder why these anarchists expend so much energy protesting Milosevic's getting some portion of his just deserts.

Though mob executions are hardly consonant with anarchist values, I find myself attracted to the Ceausescu solution, which was a common demand on signs and in chants at protests in Belgrade during the early 1990s. Perhaps a better alternative, also on demonstrators' placards, urged, "Slobo, Save Serbia—Kill Yourself." On the other hand, despite its limitations, the trial is giving victims something like their day in court, and has brought and will continue to bring important information to light.

Milosevic, Antliff explains, "is being tried under the umbrella of international justice, or so we are told. But why is Milosevic the one state criminal to be singled out for trial?" He cites, quite appropriately in my opinion, the transparent hypocrisy of an international order in which Ariel Sharon butchers Palestinians, Chinese despots do business with the US, and Russia, having waged its monstrous war against the Chechen population, joins the global crusade against "terrorism." The editors do not "endorse Milosevic's posturing as a legitimate force of opposition" to this world capitalist order, Antliff assures the reader—"far from it." Then, he continues, quite *inappropriately*, that "given his demonization in the Western media and the suppression of his voice," and given Western double standards, "Milosevic's statement contesting the legitimacy of the International Criminal Tribunal throws considerable light on why the leaders of Western governments have targeted him for sanction. He is one of them and knows how they work."

One could argue that because we live in an age of institutionalized injustice, and because other enormous crimes are therefore not being addressed—the crimes, specifically, of some of the sponsors of the Hague Tribunal—then this tribunal is illegitimate. Jacques Ellul made such a claim during the Nuremberg trials. The trial, he said, had "nothing to do with civilization condemning crime or war, but only the stronger doing what they want to the weaker. That is why we cannot speak of a division into good and evil, but only between conquerors and conquered. Was it possible that this relationship would become just?"

This is a suitable question in the present case. Can those who are plundering the world, devastating whole regions economically and ecologically for their own gain, and militarily when they are challenged, bring justice where there has been only injustice? This needs to be said, and repeated, for the sake of those who naively presume the New World Order capable of resolving the conflicts and conflagrations that characterize its reign.

In 1947 Ellul argued that the Nazi exterminations were "not a single episode conditioned by politics or war. All this murderous activity is based on a conception of the world that comes directly from the givens of our civilization," that "Human beings are only matter. Why have more respect for this matter than for any other?" Real justice would have had to confront not only "the visible consequences" of this state of affairs, "but also ... the causes. It should have called into question not just nazi concentration camps, but the concentration camp itself, including those of Russia, Spain or France. It should have called into question not only antisemitism but racism, including that of England and the USA—and so on, up to the values of a civilization that manufactures these widespread facts."

Referring directly to the horrors of the first nuclear terror bombings, in a passage anticipating his own profound critique of tech-

nology, he observed, "It is easier to push a button and so unleash an atomic bomb that kills a hundred thousand people than to plunge a knife into the stomach of your adversary. It is easier to sign a decree than to lean on a button, one signature among a thousand and an administrator makes every day. In the enormous abstraction of our civilization, life and death have also become abstract; they are no longer human problems but technical problems." In the face of such a reality, he asked, "In the name of what is the act of the victor an act of justice?"

Ellul's christian anarchist perspective is compelling, and I am almost convinced. Taoism reminds us that when the concept of justice appears, that is the sign that there is injustice; as Blake put it in *Proverbs from Hell*, "Prisons are built with stones of law. Brothers with bricks of religion." And Nuremberg, which prosecuted the Nazis selectively, letting the German industrialists who supported and benefited from the Nazi regime off the hook, not only concealed the vaster crimes of the whole civilization—colonial rapine and genocide in Africa, Asia and the Americas, most notably—it covered up the specific war crimes against civilian populations and mass terror bombings by the allied powers. Here too one might recall NATO's use of cluster bombs and depleted uranium weapons, as well as its cynical decision during the 1999 bombing campaign, in order to protect its flyers and equipment, to fly at such heights that civilian casualties were inevitable—all of which are war crimes.

But in the present case at least the implicit refusal to consider any justice until justice as a whole is attained strikes me as hopelessly utopian. Even Ellul praised, in contrast with the flawed justice of the tribunals, the spontaneous popular cry for justice, and even vengeance, of the victims of the war. This cry, he said, "demanded that things respond to a certain justice. But, as we have seen, the law they asked for was impossible to realize in the absence of a stable scale of values."<sup>10</sup> To push such an argument too far in the present context, in the face of the real suffering of Milosevic's victims, would be to undermine a limited good with a (highly ideological) notion of the best. I prefer to let Milosevic hang (which, strictly speaking, he will not, even if he is convicted) than to disseminate specious arguments about his relative innocence. Milosevic is guilty. His victims count in the hundreds of thousands, and the grim historical legacy of his misdeeds is incalculable.

### On darkness and light

Clearly, the idea that Milosevic could say *anything* enlightening to us, or anything that was not so larded with lies and misinformation as to be utterly useless, is ludicrous. Do the APR editors really think anarchists or radicals would have benefited anyone's understanding of the Second World War by printing the rationalizations of German Nazis? When Israel tried the Nazi bureaucrat Eichmann in 1961, prosecutors used the trial to focus exclusively on Jewish suffering as well as to legitimize the colonial-settler state that had recently despoiled the Palestinians; but did that mean that radicals should print Eichmann's analysis of the Second World War?<sup>11</sup> In an e-mail to me APR editor Chuck Munson said he had agreed to publish Milosevic as an expression of "free speech." Such thinking fails to recognize the simple truth that Milosevic deserves to be heard far less than do his victims, who have not had much copy in the mainstream or alternative press by my reckoning.

Indeed, perhaps APR will now decide to print Pol Pot on the well-known destruction of Cambodian society by the United States, a catastrophe that ushered his own movement into power. Or why

not print Saddam Hussein or the Taliban, whose cesspool regimes have come under more intense attack from the US than just about any other in recent memory? And shall the Rwandan *genocidaires*, who also have not been given their *Times* op ed, be given space to counter the censorship of the mainstream? At a time when the means available to radical publishing are so painfully scarce, there are more coherent, and less grotesquely self-serving texts to offer a deeper argument about justice and the limits of tribunals than the declamations, with their pseudo-legalistic aura (more than five pages of them), of this pathological liar and palpably guilty fascist—whose guilt, in fact, the APR editors say they recognize—and of his gaggle of apologists.<sup>12</sup>

Speaking of Rwanda, not even Antliff's claim that Milosevic has been "singled out" is quite accurate. Even though the trial got far less coverage, the first person to be found guilty of genocide by a modern international court was Jean-Paul Akayesu, the former

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**In 1947, Jacques Ellul argued that the Nazi exterminations were "not a single episode," but flowed "directly from the givens of our civilization."**

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mayor of the Rwandan town of Taba, convicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for ordering the killing of two thousand people.<sup>13</sup> Croat, Serb and Bosnian Muslim war criminals have been tried and some convicted, and they continue to be indicted and tried.

One also is reminded of the case of Augusto Pinochet, who also found himself at the receiving end of such treatment, at least from bourgeois Spain and England. His case also raises interesting questions about the nature of justice. For one thing, even the conviction of Pinochet would also have been pitifully inadequate. It would have been too little and too late, and would have left plenty of his collaborators, at least for the time being, unscathed (though it has, happily, put some heat on Henry Kissinger). Certainly, even if it had brought focus on the roles of Nixon and Kissinger, such a trial and conviction would have left the whole system of injustice intact. I didn't hear leftists or anarchists printing Pinochet's useful insider insights, or protesting the injustice of that selective justice. And I was glad they didn't. I rather enjoyed the spectacle of the general in his labyrinth, and sympathized with the victims demanding justice.

But what is most bewildering about Antliff's introduction is his claim that "Milosevic's statement ... throws considerable light on why the leaders of Western governments have targeted him for sanction." True, Antliff advises, one must "look beyond his lies to the truths he articulates," but then he adds: "Cornered and desperate, [Milosevic] throws caution to the winds and spells out the machinations that contributed to the break up of Yugoslavia."

An alert reader is bound to wonder how one is supposed to distinguish between lies and truths, and what "light" is being shed. Antliff does not say; perhaps that is the job—a bizarre division of labor it seems to me for anarchists to engage in—assigned to the apparatchiks at the World Socialist Website. But WorldSoc's article, "*The New York Times* on the Milosevic trial: a triumph of cynicism," despite its own muddled disclaimers, essentially legitimizes Milosevic and his victim pose. (Actually, for all I know, WorldSoc may be a single leninist hack without a party, the lone member of his own Fourth or Fifth or Sixth International, smok-

ing countless cigarettes and drinking buckets of coffee, clacking away in his cubicle. Can't anarchists aspiring to guide their readers beyond the mainstream do better than to promote this discredited ideology?)

More importantly, Milosevic is hardly "throwing caution to the winds" to reveal some dark secret known only to him and the Western powers, as Antliff suggests. His statement is exactly what he has said all along. Nor does the defendant in any meaningful sense "spell out the machinations that contributed to the break up of Yugoslavia." This eyewash is the very Serb nationalist (and leftist) chimera of a Western conspiracy to carve up Yugoslavia, with the Serbs as the country's defenders. But as most people reasonably understood during the 1990s, even without a guide beyond the mainstream news, it was Milosevic's machinations, not those of Washington or Bonn or the Vatican or Muslim fundamentalists—as various sclerotic leftists like Michael Parenti, the International Action Center, Diana Johnstone and such ilk propose—that destroyed not only Yugoslavia, but even the potential for peaceful interaction among peoples of what might have be-

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### **Ironically, in suggesting all sides were equally responsible, leftist ideologues ape the Western politicians they denounce.**

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come a loose federation of smaller post-Yugoslav states for a long time to come.

Milosevic's truths, of course, are well known to us. The West is hypocritical; NATO bombing was in many aspects criminal (though in which aspects is another question); the US bullies and bombs nations everywhere. Furthermore, to quote the defendant, the US keeps itself "immune from control or prosecution and above the law," and "if the US or any ally or client state it chose to protect was the subject of a serious effort by the Security Council to be honored with a criminal tribunal in its own name, the US would veto the threatened action."

Careful consideration of these claims is worthwhile, but one can read this almost anywhere in the progressive left press—in *The Nation*, *The Progressive*, the *commondreams.org* website and elsewhere, even in the European mainstream press. US opposition to a permanent war crimes court, and recent US threats to pull out of the Bosnia peacekeeping mission altogether because of the Pentagon's unwillingness to allow its soldiers to come under the scrutiny of international law and courts, have been widely censured, along with US disregard for international standards and treaties on the environment, women's reproductive rights, nuclear proliferation, and other issues. As for the 1999 war, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have both documented NATO war crimes and possible war crimes during the bombing campaign. (All aerial bombing strikes me as fundamentally criminal, though according to international law it is not a war crime *per se*; this is another discussion.)<sup>14</sup>

Milosevic shapes these truths to his own purpose, leavening them with exaggerated claims about the destruction of Kosova and Serbia by NATO, and with a grotesque attempt to claim the titoist mantle of Balkan federation. According to this national-socialist kleptocrat, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (the name for his post-Tito rump-Yugoslavia of Serbia and Montenegro, by the way) represented "a long-term successful solution for south Slav peoples" and "the remaining socialist government threaten-

ing the capitalist control of Europe. Therefore, "foreign capital and the geopolitical interests of the US considered this a dangerous obstacle to their plans for the New World Order, globalization, new colonialism." The US "engaged in a decade long effort, aided by several European countries, to break up and destroy the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia," including "causing the secession" of Slovenia and Croatia and even having "pried away" Bosnia "and segregated [it] into an unnatural three-region religious apartheid...."

These are apparently the machinations APR credits Milosevic for revealing, despite the night and fog of his lies. One might think that US troops, and not Milosevic's henchmen, had burned and looted villages and towns and murdered and deported ethnic others across Bosnia in the spring and summer of 1992 to create an ethnically "pure" territory. But Milosevic appeals to certain carve-up fantasies that conflate the sensible recognition of manifest US hypocrisy with a notion of coherent US *conspiracy*.

### **Diplomacy on the cheap**

Of hypocrisy, of course, there was an abundance; the US, as it was later understood, knew about these crimes and did nothing, when it could have acted at relatively low cost to halt them; but that, too is another discussion.<sup>15</sup> But contrary to the phantasm of a "decade long" US effort to break up Yugoslavia, dutifully parroted by the WorldSoc website (despite the perfunctory disclaimer it makes of vague "political opposition to" Milosevic), there has been little noticeable attempt to break up large units like Brazil or Nigeria—or, to stay within an Eastern European context, even Romania, also riven with ethnic tension—into El Salvador-sized entities to be exploited. And despite WorldSoc's convenient claim that responsibility for the Yugoslav wars "rests first and foremost with the Western powers"—convenient because these are powers Western dissidents love to hate—the US, the West, and the UN all opposed break-up along the lines of the republican borders of Yugoslavia; Slovenian and Croatian republican leaders Milan Kucan and Franjo Tudjman were in fact pressured into abandoning the declarations of independence that had become their last resort against being swallowed by Milosevic's Serb nationalist counterrevolution and the subsequent total breakdown of constitutional authority that had already wrecked the fragile Yugoslav equilibrium. In fact on June 23, 1991, the European Community foreign ministers voted unanimously against recognition of Slovenia and Croatia if the republics seceded.<sup>16</sup>

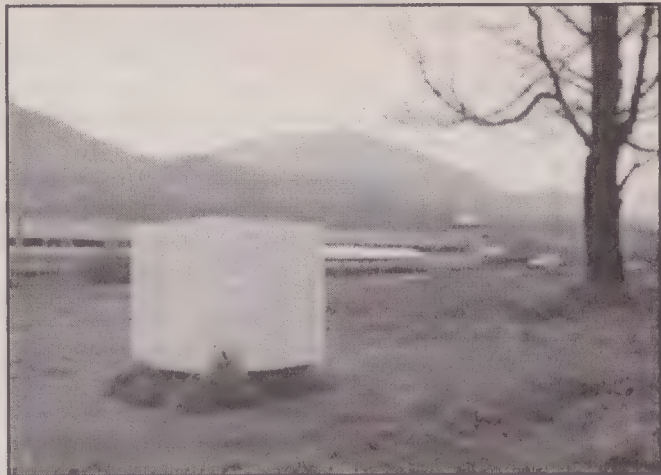
As for Milosevic's claim that Germany was behind the breakup, also dutifully parroted by WorldSoc, leftists have provided no motive and not a shred of evidence, no Wannsee Conference, so to speak, at which German imperialists decided to break up the country. The reality is that Germany was in fact involved in its own reunification and loath to get involved, and perfectly able to exploit the former Eastern Bloc countries without bombing or dividing them into smaller units. But after six months of brutal war in Croatia, ten thousand dead, and the ethnic cleansing of several hundred non-Serbs from the Krajina puppet state (as well as retaliatory ethnic cleansing of lesser numbers of Serbs from other Croatian towns), public pressure to do something forced government officials to push for recognition as a way to stop the fighting. And indeed, recognition did bring an end to the fighting at the time.<sup>17</sup>

As for Bosnia, the Great Powers' crime was not so much in recognizing the former republic as it was in refusing to help it defend itself from aggression and, by imposing an arms embargo, allowing its attackers, with their overwhelming military superior-



**Left:** the town center of Srebrenica. **Right:** The cornerstone to a memorial to the victims at Srebrenica, laid on the sixth anniversary of the massacre, July 11 2001. The cornerstone is to be part of a memorial hall for the victims of the massacre. In the surrounding fields, the remains of the victims so far exhumed from mass graves will be buried. There are between four and five thousand exhumed, and hundreds discovered monthly. Only a couple of hundred have been identified, but identification is speeding up as DNA technology is coming into use.

The old battery factory in the background was used as



headquarters by the UN Dutch Battalion during the time of the enclave, which the UN had described as a "safe area" and which the UN had promised—ambiguously, to be sure—to protect from attack. After the fall of Srebrenica tens of thousands of Muslims fled there. From there, the men (and many boys) were rounded up and taken off to be shot, and the women and children were bused to the front line and deported into territory of the Bosnian republic. Photos Peter Lippman. For Lippman's reports on his work with Bosnian Muslim refugee returnees in Srebrenica, see [www.advocacy.net.org](http://www.advocacy.net.org); go to to "Publications" and "Srebrenica."

ity, to carry out their program. Here it is worth considering not only the terrible crimes committed by the Imperium in places like Vietnam, Indonesia, Central America and Iraq, but its crimes of omission—its failure to prevent disasters when and where it has the power, and therefore the responsibility, to do so.

Thus, the reality is that while Western leaders played to an enraged public by eloquently trumpeting their opposition to ethnic cleansing and aggression, the West and the UN chose diplomacy on the cheap and humanitarian aid over military confrontation with the aggressors. They did so both out of confusion and blatant self-interest (including the narrower self-interest of individual politicians, like Bush and later Clinton, who were focused on getting reelected and doing everything to avoid complicated and possibly costly foreign military involvement).

As Branka Magas recently put it, "As Bosnia was being 'cleansed' of its population, so too was Europe to be 'cleansed' of Bosnia."<sup>18</sup> Clinging to the vain hope that the Serbs might win quickly and end the problem, or that it might simply burn itself out, the West spent years sporadically and inadequately feeding the victims, so that the gunners in the hills above places like Tuzla, Gorazde, Sarajevo and Srebrenica could kill them. The Bosnians joked bitterly about this state of affairs, calling the UN Protection Force a "self-protection force," and "eunuchs at the orgy."<sup>19</sup>

The West consistently appeased the Serb nationalist aggressors, as well as their Croat imitators, and only finally intervened militarily when politicians perceived Milosevic's wars to be getting so far out of hand that the clamor for action at home had become a greater political liability than action. They were also motivated in time by the worry that they were going to be drawn into a Macedonian conflagration (still a possibility) and be swamped with a couple of million more refugees.

No one is going to understand any of this by reading Milosevic, or WorldSoc's fulminations over the alleged falsehoods of a single sanctimonious and self-congratulatory *New York Times* editorial

about the trial. Instead we get threadbare myths of noble Serbdom and independent Yugoslavia against the world, conspiracy theories and oil-pipeline fantasies, and slander against the Albanian Kosovars, whose armed resistance, which emerged after more than a decade of intense Serb colonial violence (in fact more than a decade, but that is too involved a story to tell here), is blamed for "fomenting civil war in the province" (WorldSoc). However ardent its disavowals of the defendant, WorldSoc cements his lies firmly into place so no light could possibly shine through.

#### An aggregate of truth and fable

Indeed, I never thought I'd hear myself say such a thing since becoming an anarchist twenty-five years ago, after a decade as a marxist, but WorldSoc gives socialism a bad name. Their article is a farrago of partial truths and less-than-half-truths, innuendo, misplaced indignation, moral vacuousness, unsubstantiated claims, and outright lies. Apparently utterly incapable of reasoning, these hapless propagandists insist that "virtually every sentence" in the *Times* editorial "contains a falsehood; some contain two or three." Then, without even seeming to notice (didn't the APR editors notice?), the text proceeds to argue with issues of *interpretation*, and never refutes even a single statement of fact.

WorldSoc's version of events, also an aggregate of truth and fable, takes the *Times* to task for things it thinks the newspaper "conveniently" left out; but WorldSoc conveniently leaves out a lot of history, too. Apparently, Milosevic's main crimes were stirring up nationalism to facilitate his rise to power rather than addressing growing poverty in Yugoslavia, and, less coherently, that he "was incapable of mounting a struggle against the ruinous intervention of the Western powers," whatever that means, since "ruinous intervention," however inadequate, was in reluctant response to his genocidal policies. Our WorldSoc propagandists don't even deign to address the well-known history of the massive attacks on Bosnian communities in 1992 and after, or the

years of Israeli-style repression against the non-violent intifada of the Albanian Kosovars, followed by the Central American-style counter-insurgency and brutality against the population that led up to the 1999 war. Just as the Imperium has its worthy and unworthy victims, so too does the fossil left. No Bosnian Muslims, Croats or Albanians need apply.

Ironically, these clumsy ideologues ape the Western politicians they claim to denounce, confusing the causes, chronology and proportionality of crimes in the former Yugoslavia, and relativizing the crimes by suggesting all sides were equally responsible. Milosevic, they declare, was "no different" from Franjo Tudjman of Croatia and Alija Izetbegovic of Bosnia, "all of whom whipped up communalist hatreds and carried out violent attacks on minorities within their own territories." This of course was precisely the cynical line of shuttle diplomats and foreign ministers determined to evade this "problem from hell," this "humanitarian crisis a long way from home, in the middle of another continent" (US Secretary of State Warren Christopher's charming lines, evocative of Chamberlain). "Here you have atrocities on all sides," intoned Christopher, and WorldSoc agrees.

But the reality is that according to every credible analysis, Milosevic's movement fomented ethnic conflict, started the wars and perpetrated the far greatest proportion of crimes.<sup>20</sup> Croatia's Franjo Tudjman incontrovertibly shared responsibility with Milosevic, though historical nuance requires that we recognize him as a lesser player, an opportunist who followed Milosevic's lead and who likely only escaped the Hague Tribunal by dying of cancer.

In contrast, Izetbegovic ran a campaign in the 1990 elections based on maintaining Bosnia's multiethnic, multireligious character; moreover, along with Macedonia's Kiro Gligorov, he attempted to negotiate with the other Yugoslav republican leaders to reach a compromise that would save the country by allowing for a loose federation (a solution that Milosevic scuttled). Izetbegovic surely had his flaws, but all politicians are not exactly the same. Even as Radovan Karadzic's Serb party was arming itself with Milosevic's help, and obviously preparing to destroy the country, and as the Yugoslav army was constructing artillery emplacements around Bosnian cities, Izetbegovic refused to prepare for war and insisted on working for peace—arguably to the point of criminal naivete and negligence. Throughout the Bosnian war he continued to insist on Bosnia's multiethnic character—which, in fact, as anyone who has bothered to pay attention to the rich history of that tragic place, is at the core of authentic Bosnian identity, whether Muslim, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Jewish, atheist, or other.

Many Bosnian Muslims, and the Bosnian government as well, did eventually tend to retreat to an exclusive nationalist position. Bosnia's desperate, besieged defenders also sometimes fought back dirty, and certainly committed war crimes, though on a much smaller scale than their adversaries. Every army does in war; even Spanish anarchists committed war crimes. But where can the Bosnian Muslims and supporters of multiethnic Bosnia reasonably be said to have besieged and starved and bombed towns of Serbs? Where is the Serb Sarajevo, or Gorazde? Considering that Bosnian Muslims were being killed on the basis of their alleged identity by Serb and Croat ethno-fascists, it should not surprise us that retaliation happened, that in some cases prisoners were massacred or civilians killed and driven out of their villages, that Serbs were killed in the enclaves by individuals bent on revenge; what should surprise us is how much the Bosnian Muslims resisted being reduced to the ethno-nationalist blueprint the Serb and Croat nationalists had imposed on them, and how relatively little they

engaged in such practices. To equate Izetbegovic with Milosevic is to betray not only the victims of genocide, to betray Bosnia's ideal of multiethnic harmony, but to betray the very principles of internationalism, peace and justice that human beings will need to survive in this new millennium.

### More than a show trial

I write this in late July, seven years from the days that Milosevic's marauders were slaughtering some eight thousand unarmed Muslim men and boys, as well as some women and children, at Srebrenica, after a long, grinding, ferocious siege of the town. Nowhere in APR will the puzzled reader learn about them. Instead we are harangued by the chief architect of these crimes for the "light" his testimony purportedly offers. In a defense evocative of the murderer of his parents who asks for mercy because he is an orphan, this monster declares that "the very charge of the Security Council—genocide, crimes against peace, war crimes, or crimes against humanity—demonizes any person thereafter accused." According to this twisted, Kafaesque logic-in-reverse, accusation itself signals his innocence and the tribunal's illegitimacy, and therefore "its prisoners ... should be released." Is this APR's point? Shall anarchists and others fight for the release of the butcher of Srebrenica and other war criminals? Shall they join his defense committee, this coven of stalinist hacks and bewildered others whose grunting polemics are disseminated on APR editor Tom Wheeler's e-mail list? Does a consistent anti-imperialism require us to show our solidarity with the executioners, and our indifference to their victims?

Or is it APR's point, as WorldSoc avers, quoting with approval another capitalist media bastion, Britain's *Financial Times*, simply that "there is more than a whiff of victor's justice about the proceeding"? Does that make the trial *wholly* illegitimate? I am not sure how APR distinguishes the lies from the light.

According to WorldSoc, compared to Nuremberg, the current Hague tribunal is a "mockery of justice." Not only is the scale far different (which though true does not invalidate charges of genocide), Nazi victims "were not simply casualties of war or civil war, but rather the victims of an organized and systematic effort to exterminate entire classes and races of people." This of course is the very thing that the Hague Tribunal, even without access to many internal government documents, should be able to demonstrate about Milosevic's project, which in some aspects was largely accomplished: that it was "an organized and systematic effort to exterminate entire classes and races of people" from the lands Greater Serb politicians coveted and conquered.<sup>21</sup>

The Milosevic trial, like the entire Western intervention in the Balkans, is too little and disastrously too late. The Nazi regime had already been destroyed when some of its leaders were tried and punished. Today, significant vestiges of Milosevic's project remain intact. Serbia is riddled with individuals and institutions that played a significant role in territorial conquest, brutality and mass murder. The 1995 Dayton Accords also ratified the destruction of the Bosnian synthesis and the conquest of territory through ethnic cleansing by recognizing the ethno-exclusive Bosnian Serb "entity," a *functioning product of genocide*. As Rusmir Mahmutcehajic has observed, for the most part Bosnian Muslims now live only in those areas of Bosnia where they were able to defend themselves. Everywhere else they and their cultural monuments and institutions were swept away and "disappeared" by the Serb and Croat ethno-fascist armies.<sup>22</sup> Despite the terms of the agreement, and in contrast with the Albanian Kosovars, hardly any Bosnian Muslims have been allowed to return to their homes.

This entity must be abolished, and the massive denial in Serbia reversed before an honest coming to terms can be achieved. Leftists in the West who participate in genocide denial and directly or indirectly champion Milosevic and his cronies by promoting his claims undermine that necessary process.<sup>23</sup>

Ultimately, from an anarchist point of view (which is by definition a kind of "ultimate" view), neither the mass murderer in the dock nor the governments accusing him are legitimate. Anarchists desire not a world of courts, but one founded on freedom, peace, justice, and the whole truth. But this world is complex; humility and humanity require that we recognize that therefore some aspects of the dominant paradigm and our counter-paradigms must at times inevitably converge.

In this vein, I have to say I was pleased when a KKK assassin was recently found guilty in Birmingham, Alabama of killing four

stand in the way.

Surely, whatever the outcome of this trial, the truth should be clear enough. If there is a "whiff of victor's justice" about it, without it there might be no justice at all.

*Thanks to Lorraine Perlman, Roger Lippman, Peter Lippman, Sunfrog Jazz, and Peter Werbe for their comments and suggestions on this essay.*

### Endnotes

1. See Anthony Borden, "Milosevic at the Bar," *The Nation*, April 1, 2002, and Ed Vulliamy, "Face to face with the victims of his horror," *The Observer*, February 17, 2002. See also Borden's "Milosevic 'Planned' Kosovo Deportations," *Balkan Crisis Report* No. 317, February 13, 2002.
2. Milosevic is quoted in Tim Judah, "The Star of The Hague," *The New York Review of Books*, April 25, 2002, at [www.nybooks.com/gal070](http://www.nybooks.com/gal070).
3. News of the trial and the transcripts are available at the very useful website of the Institute for War and Peace Reporting at [www.iwpr.net](http://www.iwpr.net). Human Rights Watch has also published a thick and thorough summary of the war, *Under Orders: War Crimes in Kosovo*, available on line at [www.hrw.org/reports/2001/kosovo](http://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/kosovo). The Balkan Witness website, at [www.glypx.com/BalkanWitness](http://www.glypx.com/BalkanWitness), also has a page with useful links to commentary and reports.
4. See their *Indictment at The Hague: The Milosevic Regime and Crimes of the Balkan Wars* (Pamphleteer's Press/NYU Press, 2002). "A person is individually responsible for the commission of a crime of war if he commits a clearly definable war crime or aids and abets in the commission of such a war crime. An individual is also to be held legally responsible if he is complicit in the commission of genocide, has command responsibility for individuals or organizations that commit war crimes, or if he fails to prevent or punish the commission of war crimes by those individuals or organizations over which he has authority" (page 35). Though according to international law culpability on any single level of these levels of responsibility—direct responsibility, command responsibility, and complicity-based responsibility—would be enough to convict him, Milosevic is clearly guilty on all three. Cigar and Williams provide a valuable and detailed description of the war crimes convention protocols as well as ample evidence from the public domain of Milosevic's guilt.
5. For Belgrade's noncompliance, see Bozo Nikolic, "Serbia is sick with indifference," translated from *Monitor* (Podgorica, Montenegro), and "Belgrade isn't fit to help," *The Washington Post/The International Herald-Tribune*, March 22, 2002, reprinted in *Bosnia Report*, January-May 2002. According to Tim Judah, the Belgrade weekly *Nedeljni Telegraf* has confirmed reports that "Milosevic ordered the entire archives of the Yugoslav army's military intelligence to be transferred to his office. After he fell on 5 October 2000 none of these was found." The *Telegraf* also reported that Radomir Markovic, Milosevic's secret police chief until his own arrest for suspicion of political murders and attempted murders of Milosevic opponents, "copied the entire archive about the Kosovo Liberation Army on to CDs." Milosevic has been using this information, and information compiled by Markovic's successor, in court against Albanian witnesses. (See Judah, "Serbia backs Milosevic in trial by TV," *The Observer*, March 3, 2002.) The Serbian government has also failed to investigate mass graves of Albanian Kosovars recently discovered inside Serbia, including on police property. Four graves found in the late spring of 2002 yielded four to five hundred bodies. See "Serbia: New Mass Graves Found," *IWPR Balkan Crisis Report* No. 343, June 14, 2002. See also Mirko Klarin, "Analysis: Milosevic Hague Anniversary," *IWPR Tribunal report* No. 272, June 24-30, 2002.
6. After the attack from across the border in Serbia and subsequent slaughter and deportation of Bosnians at Zvornik in the early days of the Bosnia war in 1992, Seselj stated, "Milosevic was in total control, and the operation was planned in Belgrade ... The Bosnian Serb forces took part in it. But the special units and the best combat units came from this side [Serbia]. These were police units—the so-called Red Berets—special units of the Serbian Interior Ministry of Belgrade. The army engaged itself to a small degree—it gave artillery support where it was needed.

## Should radicals and anarchists fight for the release of the butcher of Srebrenica? Does anti-imperialism require us to show solidarity with executioners, and indifference to their victims?

little girls and injuring others in the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church back in 1963. Again, it was too little, too late; even worse, the rich and powerful of Birmingham, who had incited the mostly lowly KKK thugs to terrorize Birmingham blacks and their allies, escaped both scrutiny and justice. Such trials tend to foster the illusion that things have changed, when fundamentally they have not; but they also, paradoxically, prove that in some other sense things *have* changed since 1963. As uncertain as that gained ground may be, I refuse to surrender it, to return to 1963. I am willing to live with that paradox, and so I didn't protest the FBI or the police or the courts on that one. I felt some relief, and some sense of vindication for the victims. I say this not only because serious injustices and justice are often wound up in the same skein, but because there is more important work to be done. Hence APR's gift to Milosevic, this clumsy attempt at counter-spin in the interest of "free speech," offends both one's sense of humility, and humanity. Too many people have suffered and died, too much cultural patrimony and historical promise have been lost, to respond to such folly with anything but the disappointment it has caused, and the contempt it deserves.<sup>24</sup>

The Hague Tribunal is clearly something much more than a mere victors' show trial; the institution itself has proven to be an amalgam of power and justice, of imperial military authority and the authority of conscience that has motivated activists, human rights workers, jurists and others to struggle to create international standards of justice and to see them enforced.<sup>25</sup> As an anti-authoritarian, I generally leave it to others to attempt to impose even humane international norms; I am enough persuaded by Ellul's intransigent logic to choose not to lend my own meager resources to such ventures. But from an anti-statist perspective, the whole Balkan debacle has been a series of impossible choices—ambivalent, human choices. When Milosevic is convicted, as he will likely be if he doesn't choose Tudjman's way out, it will also be far too little, but it won't be all bad. His victims, too, will have had some say; decency and the fate of the victims both require that one not

The operation had been prepared for a long time. It wasn't carried out in any nervous fashion. Everything was well-organized and implemented." See Laura Silber and Allan Little's highly praised *Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation* (Penguin, 1997), pages 223-24, and Mark Danner, "America and the Bosnian Genocide," *The New York Review of Books*, December 4, 1997. Danner's series of articles in *The New York Review* is excellent.

7. See "Workers Aid & the Betrayals of the Left, in the Spring 2002 *Fifth Estate*.

8. See "L'Ultra-Gauche dans la tourmente revisionniste," François-Georges Lavacquerie, in *Libertaires et 'Ultra-Gauche' contre la Négationnisme* (Editions Reflex, not dated, probably 1995).

9. After learning that I intended to comment on the APR Milosevic spread, and after a disappointing e-mail exchange, Antliff withdrew from the FE collective.

10. See "Lessons from Nuremberg," reprinted in *The Catholic Worker*, March-April 2002.

11. See Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (Viking, 1963).

12. If they had wanted to print something "beyond the mainstream," they might have printed a whole range of humane radical and democratic voices from the former Yugoslavia who almost never even get mentioned, e.g. Srđa Popović, Zorana Papić, Bogdan Bogdanović, Bogdan Denitch, Dubravka Ugrešić, Slavenka Drakulić, Sonja Biserko, Branka Magas, Kemal Pervanić, Skelzen Maliqi, Veton Surroi, Nenad Canak, Zlatko Dizdarević, Kemal Kurspahić, Ruzmir Mahmutćehajić, Ivo Banac—I could go on. One gets the idea that APR editors don't even know such people exist. One way to learn more, besides checking out the sources already mentioned, is to read current and back issues of *Bosnia Report* (for information on this invaluable project see [www.bosnia.org.uk](http://www.bosnia.org.uk)).

13. The UN court's findings can be found at [www.ictj.org/ENGLISH/cases/Akayesu/judgement/akay001.htm](http://www.ictj.org/ENGLISH/cases/Akayesu/judgement/akay001.htm). That there are injustices in the process in Rwanda is clear. For example, while lower-level mass killers are jammed into local prisons under terrible conditions facing the death penalty, relative bigshots like Akayesu have enjoyed Western standards of incarceration, exercise machines and big-screen television, and prospects of a life sentence. Nor do the tribunals do anything to bring restitution to the victims. But none of this exactly invalidates Akayesu's conviction. He really did it. See Elizabeth Neuffer's *The Key to My Neighbor's House: Seeking Justice in Bosnia and Rwanda* (Picador USA, 2002).

14. For the Human Rights Watch report, see note 3 above. For the Amnesty report, see "NATO Violations of the Laws of War during Operation Allied Force Must Be Investigated," AI Index EUR, News Service Number 102, June 7, 2000, and "AI's Initial Comments on the Review by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia of NATO's Operation Allied Force," News Service Number 116, June 13, 2000.

15. See Mark Danner's series in *The New York Review of Books*, particularly "The US and the Yugoslav Catastrophe" (November 20, 1997), "America and the Bosnia Genocide" (December 4, 1997), and "Clinton, the UN, and the Bosnian Disaster" (December 18, 1997). See also Charles Lane and Thom Shanker, "What the CIA Didn't Tell Us," *The New York Review of Books*, May 9, 1996. During 1992-93 four American diplomats and officials resigned to protest US policy in the former Yugoslavia, unusual in the history of US diplomacy. One, George Kenney, commented that State Department policy amounted to "Let's pretend this is not happening" (Silber and Little, 252). He wrote in his resignation, "The trick ... was to ignore any facts—whether they pertained to atrocities, rumors of concentration camps, or starvation—that would complicate the policy goal of not getting involved ... Discussions about how to characterize the conflict without taking sides often bordered on the absurd. Supported by others at the working level, I drafted press guidance—material for State Department spokesmen—which consistently referred to and condemned Serbian shelling of Bosnian civilians. The Serbs, after all, had more than one hundred pieces of heavy artillery around Sarajevo, while the Bosnian government defenders had fewer than a dozen. This was essentially a Serbian siege in which the Bosnians were shooting back as much as they could. But senior officers ... pressed repeatedly to have spokesmen say that 'all sides' were shelling each other, without focusing blame on Serbian

forces." He told reporter Peter Maass afterward, "I just couldn't stand it anymore, writing stuff that was covering up our inability to deal with the problem, and by covering it up, we were letting things get worse ... I got fed up. Every day it was lies." See Maass's *Love Thy Neighbor: A Story of War* (Vintage, 1996), pages 62-64.

16. See, among many other books making this argument, Christopher Bennett's *Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse: Causes, Course and Consequences* (NYU Press, 1995). By wrecking the constitutional order, overthrowing the legal autonomy of Kosovo, and renewing the age-old problem of Serb nationalist hegemonism, it was in fact Milosevic's Serbia that was secessionist, and not the four of six republics (and the province of Kosovo) that ultimately decided on independence. This has been succinctly argued by, among others, commentators of the left with impeccable credentials such as Branka Magas and Catherine Samary. See Magas's indispensable *The Destruction of Yugoslavia: Tracking the Break-Up 1980-1992* (Verso, 1993), and Samary's *Yugoslavia Dismembered* (Monthly Review Press, 1995).

17. The Wannsee Conference took place in January 1942 in that Berlin suburb. There, Nazi Undersecretaries of State planned the Final Solution for all of European Jews. See Arendt, chapter seven. For the impact of recognition, see Mark Thompson, *A Paper House: The Ending of Yugoslavia* (Pantheon, 1992). Misha Glenny takes another position in his *The Fall of Yugoslavia: The Third Balkan War* (Penguin Books, 1992). But no commentator doubts that recognition came long after the war in Croatia had already wrecked the republic.

18. See "The Great Betrayal," a review of Brendan Simms's *Unfinest Hour: Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia* (Allen Lane/Penguin, 2001), in the January-May *Bosnia Report*.

19. For a particularly vivid portrayal of UN complicity, see David Rieff's *Slaughterhouse: Bosnia and the Failure of the West* (Touchstone, 1995).

20. In August 1992 the London Conference found the Serb nationalist camp to be "responsible for the overwhelming majority of transgressions." See James Gow, *Triumph of the Lack of Will: International Diplomacy and the Yugoslav War* (Columbia University Press, 1997), page 234. So had the International Red Cross, Helsinki Watch, Amnesty International, the US State Department (for what that is worth), and the International Court of Justice. See Robert J. Donia and John V.A. Fine, Jr.'s worthy history, *Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Tradition Betrayed* (Columbia University Press, 1994), page 246, and Carol Rogel, *The Breakup of Yugoslavia and the War in Bosnia* (Greenwood Press, 1998), page 32. The UN Security Council Commission of Experts report in May 1994 called Serb nationalist ethnic cleansing "systematic," and "influenced, encouraged, facilitated and condoned" by Serb leaders, and added, "It is clear that there is no factual basis for arguing that there is a 'moral equivalence' between the warring factions." See Maass, page 280. See also Tim Judah, *The Serbs: History, Myth and the Destruction of Yugoslavia* (Yale, 2000), and Noel Malcolm's *Bosnia: A Short History* (NYU Press, 1996).

21. Here is it worth addressing this issue of genocide as the destruction of whole groups more fully. The term genocide, writes Michael Sells, "was coined by the jurist Rafael Lemkin as part of an effort to learn from the experience of the Holocaust and to develop an international legal consensus about certain kind of systematic atrocities." As Sells notes, "Lemkin emphasizes that the term does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of an entire nation. Rather, it entails 'a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups.' Among the targets for destruction in such a plan, Lemkin lists institutions of culture, language, and national feelings, and the security of property, liberty, health, dignity, and human life. The key criterion for genocide, according to Lemkin, is that it be 'directed against the national group as an entity'; violence against individuals is directed against them 'not in their individual capacity, but as members of the national group.'" Sells has performed something of a Chomskyesque role as one-man truth squad in the US about the Balkans (a far more admirable role, alas, than Chomsky has played in this matter). See his *The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia* (University of California Press, 1996), 40-45. His website on war crimes can be found at [www.haverford.edu/relg/sells/reports.html](http://www.haverford.edu/relg/sells/reports.html).

# ISRAEL: The U.S. in Miniature

Much of the population of Israel, no different from people in the United States, denies its past as an invader/settler nation, is oblivious to the suffering which creates its plentitude, revels in self-generated myths of its goodness and bravery, and cannot fathom why such rage is directed at it.

Both nations live in what Noam Chomsky describes as a state of "willful ignorance." The information readily exists for either people to easily understand their origins and how their country and culture engage the world, but blinders are preferable to many rather than having to face the consequences of what a look at reality would demand of them.

The European invasion and genocidal destruction of the North and South American indigenous cultures, cleansed the continent as part of the importation of a poisonous culture and governmental system that had brought social and ecological wreckage to its homeland. The Israelis, although basing their state on similar land dispossession, are faced with resistance of their victims who remain.

Our coverage includes two essays by Jewish Americans, one which traces the history of Israel from its beginning as a Zionist vision, the other looks at the current Intifada. Also, included in this section is an essay from the Situationist International written at the time of the 1967 war. Though written 35 years ago, it retains its sharp critique.



Left: Reminiscent of Tianamen Square, a Palestinian woman faces off an Israeli army bulldozer. After destroying two houses, it began digging up her field of olive trees. Thousands of olive trees have been uprooted as collective punishment since the beginning of the Intifada.

photo/Not In My Name; see [www.nimn.org](http://www.nimn.org)

## The Mythology of Israel

by ronni kt

My mother was born the same year as Israel, to deeply scarred Jews who had just narrowly survived the butchery of Nazi Poland. She has been an active Zionist all her life. From her I learned that the nation of Israel was mine by birthright; but bad Arabs, Jew-haters, wanted to take it all away.

A lot of people use the previous suffering of European Jews to justify current brutalities by the Israeli government against Palestinians. And some of the more cynical exploiters of Jewish suffering are, unfortunately, mainstream American Jewish Zionist organizations. The Anti-Defamation League, American Jewish Congress, and Jewish Federations across the nation have fallen into a lockstep position of pro-Israel-no-matter-what, labeling all critics

22. See his *The Denial of Bosnia* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000). See also Ivan Lovrenovic, "Milosevic's crimes and the existence of the Republika Srpska," and Kemal Pervanic, "The Violence Continues," in the January-May 2002 *Bosnia Report*.

23. As Mirna Jancic, herself made a refugee by Milosevic, has written, "If it were not for the tribunal, the world would be hailing Milosevic as a fighter against terrorism; Croatia would be basking in the reflected glory of its innocent war of independence; Bosnia would not even question the possibility of its own guilt and Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic would be taking turns as presidents of Republika Srpska. How torturous it would be then even to try opening up a debate on war crimes." See her "An Audience with Milosevic," April 25, 2002, available on the *Bosnia Report* website. In fact the tribunal has brought a lot of pressure to bear in Croatia and Bosnia, not just in Serbia. In all three countries, the people opposing the tribunal's work are reactionary nationalists or worse. Serbian human rights activist Sonja Biserko has noted that for Serbia, "The process of establishing justice is an essential component of all post-conflict situations. So it is particularly important for the Milosevic trial to gain credibility also in Serbia itself, since that is the only way for Serbia to become normalized and to establish relations of trust with its neigh-

bors." See her "Serbia and The Hague," *Bosnia Report*, January-May 2002. The failure to bring even a flawed international justice to bear on the perpetrators of Croatia and Bosnia after 1995 laid the groundwork for Serb nationalist military and paramilitary forces to renew their genocidal ventures in Kosova in 1999. See Cigar and Williams, pages 22-23.

24. For the effects of Milosevic's crimes on two Bosnian families, see Chuck Sudetic's unrelenting *Blood and Vengeance: One Family's Story of the War in Bosnia* (Penguin Books, 1999), and Roger Cohen's *Hearts Grown Brutal: Sagas of Sarajevo* (Random House, 1998). For the Alabama trial, see "In One Last Trial, Alabama Faces Old Wound," Rick Bragg, *The New York Times*, May 12, 2002. For the limitations of the trial, see Diane McWhorter, *Carry Me Home: Birmingham, Alabama: The Climactic Battle of the Civil Rights Revolution* (Touchstone, 2002).

25. In fact, one modest outcome of the international tribunals is the demand from Israeli antiwar and anti-occupation activists to send Ariel Sharon to The Hague, and their warnings to Israeli soldiers that they may face war crimes charges for their role in the occupation of remnant Palestine. See [www.gush-shalom.org/warcimes/index.html](http://www.gush-shalom.org/warcimes/index.html)

of Israel as either anti-Semites, or as self-hating Jews.

The very real pain of my family and my people has transmogrified into political and military might, and is being expressed ragefully upon the necks of the Palestinians. It's not easy to admit to yourself, much less announce this to the world.

For years I tried strenuously to ignore the Middle East, focusing my politics everywhere else. But eventually the holes in the "poor, defenseless Israel" story I grew up with became too large to ignore, so I traveled to the West Bank to see for myself.

It was 1999: thirty-two years into the occupation, and just before the start of the second Intifada. All signs pointed to imminent uprising. Four generations crowded into squalid refugee camps with no potable water could look over the barbed wire, up the hill, and see neatly landscaped Jewish-only settlement, patrolled by soldiers carrying American weapons, built on land their families had farmed only fifty or twenty-five years earlier. Israeli soldiers were everywhere, demanding identification papers, refusing passage, spitting curses.

Under the macho exterior, you could see the fear in the soldiers' eyes. Brutalizing an entire people, trying to make them disappear—it's scary, dehumanizing work, and I can't imagine it sits well on their consciences.

This is not an ancient conflict. One hundred and thirty years ago, the tiny piece of land now known as Israel and the Occupied Territories was fairly peaceful. Ninety-six percent of the population was Muslim or Christian. The remaining four percent were Jews. They were all Palestinians, all Semites, and pretty much all got along.

Then Zionism came from late 19th century Europe, bearing with it a distinct taint of the colonialism endemic to that time and place. The Zionists encouraged Jews to flee oppressive conditions in Russia and Eastern Europe and migrate to Palestine with the eventual aim of taking it over completely.

Zionism in practice, is a form of imperialist domination. It was set forth not by the Jews who lived in the Arab world for millennia, but by European Jews. The Zionists did not propose taking a piece of Russia, or, more reasonably still, after the Holocaust, a piece of Germany. Instead, they approached Britain following World War I, asking for one of its colonies on which to create their state. By 1936, Jews made up a quarter of the population of Palestine, and the local people were growing increasingly uneasy about the massive wave of Europeans coming in, buying up the land, and forming armed militias. The Palestinians launched a three-year general strike and revolt against what they perceived to be a threat to their existence.

After World War II, when the full horrors of the Jewish Holocaust were revealed, the world's sympathy flowed toward the Jewish people. Although the US government knew during the war that European Jews were being massacred, it refused to take in Jewish refugees. After the war, the US absolved its conscience by supporting the creation of a Jewish homeland in faraway Palestine.

The United Nations partitioned Palestine into Palestine and Israel. The Zionists received 56% of the land, despite numbering only a third of the population. The Arabs protested mightily, and war broke out in May 1948. The Zionist army, larger and better

equipped than the combined Arab forces, increased Israel's portion to three-quarters of Palestine.

The 1948 war created 800,000 Palestinian refugees, largely as the result of Zionist "land-clearing operations" like the Deir Yassin massacre, causing thousands of Palestinians to flee their homes in terror. Palestinians refer to the events of 1948 as al-Naqba—the Catastrophe. In 1967, another war, and Israel captured the rest of Palestine, which it occupies to this day.

Although Israeli schoolchildren are taught the myth of "a land without a people for a people without a land," the establishment of the Jewish state of Israel required a large-scale removal of the existing non-Jewish population. Through the use of intimidation, imprisonment, assassinations, land confiscations, house demolitions, and bureaucratic restrictions of every imaginable kind, this displacement is still underway.

There is no place for Palestinians in the Jewish state of Israel. Well, almost none.

Under Israeli occupation, there have been virtually no employment opportunities for Palestinians. However, Israel found a use for them: working undesirable, low-wage, no-benefit jobs in Israel. But after the 1993 Oslo Accords, the lives of Palestinians under occupation became tightly regulated by the Israeli military, and they were restricted from getting into Israel proper. So, Israel began to import hundreds of thousands of overseas contract workers from throughout the Third World to do its unpleasant work.

Israel is very American that way.

There were even plans afoot to create a number of export processing zones in Occupied Palestine where the impoverished, virtually imprisoned populace could again make themselves useful, assembling luxury items for Israel and the rest of the First World. Its slogan was going to be Peace Through Profits, but

the current Intifada has scuttled the capitalists' big plans.

The Palestinian people, chased out by the Zionists, used as political pawns by Arab governments and ignored by the rest of the world, began to organize a resistance movement after the 1967 war. Known as fedayeen, young guerillas, men and women, carried out daring operations such as commando raids against the Israeli army and the infamous plane hijackings.

Many fedayeen considered themselves engaged in the same struggle against imperialism and racism as the Black Panthers and the Vietnamese National Liberation Front. Abu Iyad, one of the leaders of al-Fatah (Yasser Arafat's organization), expressed in a 1970 interview, the readiness of al-Fatah to fight alongside oppressed people, including Jews, anywhere in the world.

By 1987, after twenty years of military occupation, the Palestinian people rose up en masse in a spontaneous rebellion known as the Intifada. Almost everybody participated in protest strikes. Young people threw stones at Israeli tanks and soldiers patrolling their towns and refugee camps. The struggle raged for years and tens of thousands of Palestinians were shot by Israeli soldiers.

The situation did not settle down until the 1993 Oslo Accords which created the Palestinian Authority (PA) to manage several small Palestinian autonomous areas within the West Bank and Gaza. Palestinians accepted Israeli sovereignty over 78% of pre-1948 Palestine on the assumption that they could soon make their state on the remaining 22%. The most sensitive issues, such as

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piece of  
Germany.**

Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, the status of Jerusalem, and the right of return for refugees were deferred until 1998. Meanwhile, more of Occupied Palestine was to be turned over to the Palestinian Authority.

Many Palestinians had high hopes, feeling that the end of the hated occupation was finally in sight. But instead, since Oslo, Israel has doubled the area of its settlements, confiscated an additional 80,000 acres of Palestinian land, and demolished thousands of Palestinian homes. Massive bypass roads built for exclusive Israeli use have carved Palestinian territory into smaller and more isolated segments. The fundamental issues like statehood, continued to be put off. As more military checkpoints were built, and a permit system put in place, Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza found Israeli control tightening around them.

### No more brutality in our name

During the course of all this, the Palestinian Authority was becoming something of a subcontractor of the occupation. Previously, the Israelis would detain and torture suspected Palestinian militants. With the PA established, they began turning some of that dirty work over to the Palestinians which began building prisons and establishing its police force. In the West Bank and Gaza, crowded areas beset by massive poverty and unemployment, the PA was one of the few providers of employment and quickly became mired in nepotism and corruption.

Although the PA receives vastly smaller amounts of money than Israel does, it has been largely dependent on US aid to survive. During a 1999 visit, I heard rumors of a CIA station inside the Bethlehem PA headquarters.

The continuing Israeli brutality and land-grabbing, coupled with a healthy mistrust of their own leadership structure, left the Palestinian people justifiably on edge. Ariel Sharon's provocative march

in 2000 on the al-Aqsa Mosque provided the spark for the second Intifada which is still raging with no end in sight.

Mainstream Jewish organizations attempt to portray worldwide Jewry as united in support of Israel. But there is a sizable and growing Jewish movement to end the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

In Israel, groups like Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, Rabbis for Human Rights, and Women for Women Political Prisoners have long been working to oppose Israeli human rights violations. And since the start of the new Intifada, a petition by Israeli reservists who are refusing to serve "beyond the 1967 borders to dominate, expel, starve and humiliate an entire people" has been steadily growing; many of the signatories currently sit in military prisons. And, recently in Tel Aviv, 100,000 Israelis rallied to end the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

In the US, which sends over \$8 million each day to Israel's military, the Palestinian liberation movement is gaining momentum, too. Arab and Arab-American groups have long been active on this issue, and have recently been joined by a great many others. A number of radical Jewish, anti-Zionist groups have sprung up in major cities, including Jewish Voices Against the Occupation here in Seattle. There are ongoing boycotts of Israeli products, and organized campaigns to end US military aid to Israel. Mock checkpoints and refugee camps have been erected in cities to demonstrate the reality of the occupation.

Of course, criticism of Israel must take a cue from Abu Iyad, and always be coupled with an intolerance of anti-Jewish prejudice. This is not, after all, a conflict over religion, but over power, over land and nationalism. All Jews, and all Americans, have a responsibility to be active and vocal in the movement for justice for Palestinians. We can tolerate no more brutality in our name.

## The Situationists on the Palestinian Question

**FE NOTE:** The following passages are from a 1967 Situationist International article, "Two Local Wars," commenting on the aftermath of the Arab-Israel Six Day War and the U.S. invasion of Vietnam. It is available in several anthologies of the group's writing. Besides the enduring relevance of the SI's critique of Middle East events contained here, what is remarkable is that an FE staff member found this on a Palestinian web site centered in the West Bank city of Ramallah in the Occupied Territories. This speaks volumes to the diversity present in the resistance to the Israeli oppression. See [www.ramallahonline.com](http://www.ramallahonline.com).

These paragraphs are from an anthology translated by Ken Knabb and published by the Bureau of Public Secrets, PO Box 1044, Berkeley CA 94701, USA. The complete article is at <http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/11.wars.htm>.

**T**he absence of a revolutionary movement in the developed countries has reduced the Left to its simplest expression: a mass of spectators who swoon with rapture each time the exploited in the colonies take up arms against their masters, and who cannot help seeing these uprisings as the epitome of Revolution. . . . Wherever there is a conflict they always see Good fighting Evil, "total revolution" versus "total reaction."

Revolutionary criticism begins beyond good and evil; it is rooted in history and operates on the totality of the existing world. In no case can it applaud a belligerent state or support the bureaucracy

of an exploiting state in the process of formation. It must first of all lay bare the truth of present struggles by putting them back into their historical context, and unmask the hidden aims of the forces officially in conflict. . . .

Since its origins the Zionist movement has been the contrary of the revolutionary solution to what used to be called the "Jewish question." A direct product of European capitalism, it did not aim at the overthrow of a society that needed to persecute Jews, but at the creation of a Jewish national entity that would be protected from the anti-Semitic aberrations of decadent capitalism. It did not strive to abolish injustice, but to transfer it. The original sin of Zionism is that it has always acted as if Palestine were a desert island. . . . The creation of the state of Israel is merely a miserable by-product of the triumph of world counterrevolution. To "socialism in a single country" came the echo "justice for a single people" and "equality in a single kibbutz." . . . The Jews recreated for themselves all the fanaticism and segregation they had been victims of. Those who had suffered mere toleration in their society were to struggle to become in another country owners disposing of the right to tolerate others. . . .

### Brought forth a monster

The co-option of all the "progressive" forms of social organization and their integration within the Zionist ideal enabled even the most "revolutionary" individuals to work in good conscience

for the building of the bourgeois, militaristic, rabbinical state that modern Israel has become. The prolonged sleep of proletarian internationalism once more brought forth a monster. The basic injustice against the Palestinian Arabs came back to roost with the Jews themselves: the State of the Chosen People was nothing but one more class society in which all the aberrations of the old societies were recreated (hierarchical divisions, tribal opposition between the Ashkenazi and the Sephardim, racist persecution of the Arab minority, etc.). . . .

But this is due not only to the contradictions of Israeli society. From the outset this situation has been constantly maintained and aggravated by the surrounding Arab societies, which have so far proved incapable of any contribution toward an effective solution. . . .

The 1948 defeat signaled the end of the "bourgeois-feudality" as the leading class of the Arab movement. It was the opportunity for the petty bourgeoisie to come to power and to constitute, with the officers of the defeated army, the driving force of the present movement. Its program was simple: Arab unity, a vaguely socialist ideology, and the liberation of Palestine (the Return). The Tripartite aggression of 1956 [England, France and Israel's joint attack on Egypt during the "Suez crisis"] provided it with the best opportunity to consolidate itself as a ruling class and to find a leader-program in the person of Nasser, who was presented for the collective admiration of the completely dispossessed Arab masses. He was their religion and their opium. But the new exploiting class had its own interests and goals. The slogans used by the bureaucratic-military regime of Egypt to win popular support were already bad in themselves; in addition, the regime was incapable of carrying them out. . . .

### Freezes the process of social revolution

Twenty years after the first Palestinian war [1948], this new stratum has just demonstrated its total inability to resolve the Palestinian problem. It has lived by delirious bluff, for it was only able to survive by constantly raising the specter of Israel, being utterly incapable of effecting any radical solution whatsoever to the innumerable domestic problems. . . .

The latest war [1967] has dissipated all these illusions. The total rigidity of "Arab ideology" was pulverized on contact with a reality that was just as hard but also permanent. Those who spoke of waging a war neither wanted it nor prepared for it, while those who spoke only of defending themselves actually prepared the offensive. Each of the two camps followed their respective propensities — the Arab bureaucracy that for lying and demagoguery, the masters of Israel that for imperialist expansion. The most important lesson of the Six Day War is a negative one: it has revealed all the secret weaknesses and defects of what was presented as the "Arab Revolution." . . .

As for Israel, it has become everything that the Arabs had accused it of before the war: an imperialist state behaving like the

most classic occupation forces (police terror, dynamiting of houses, permanent martial law, etc.). Internally a collective hysteria, led by the rabbis, is developing around "Israel's inalienable right to its Biblical borders." The war put a stop to the whole movement of internal struggles generated by the contradictions of this artificial society (in 1966 there were several dozen riots, and there were no fewer than 277 strikes in 1965 alone) and provoked unanimous support for the objectives of the ruling class and its most extremist ideology. It also served to shore up all the Arab regimes not involved in the armed struggle. . . .

### No short-term solution is feasible

As always, war, when not civil, only freezes the process of social revolution. In North Vietnam it has brought about the peasants' support, never before given, for the bureaucracy that exploits them. In Israel it has killed off for a long time any opposition to Zionism, and in the Arab countries it is reinforcing — temporarily — the most reactionary strata. In no way can revolutionary currents find anything there with which to identify. Their task is at the opposite pole of the present movement since it must be its absolute negation. . . .

Unlike the Vietnam war, the Palestinian question has no immediately evident solution. No short-term solution is feasible. The Arab regimes can only crumble under the weight of their contradictions and Israel will be more and more the prisoner of its colonial logic. All the compromises that the great powers try to piece together are bound to be counterrevolutionary in one way or another. The hybrid status quo — neither peace nor war — will



An Israeli settler boy kicks a Palestinian woman as a girl pulls her headscarf in a market in the divided West Bank town of Hebron, Aug. 9, 2001.

probably prevail for a long period, during which the Arab regimes will meet with the same fate as their predecessors of 1948 (probably at first to the profit of the openly reactionary forces).

Arab society, which has produced all sorts of ruling classes caricaturing all the classes of history, must now produce the forces that will bring about its total subversion. The so-called national bourgeoisie and the Arab bureaucracy have inherited all the defects of those two classes without ever having known the historical accomplishments those classes achieved in other societies. The future Arab revolutionary forces that will arise from the ruins of the June 1967 defeat must know that they have nothing in common with any existing Arab regime and nothing to respect among the powers that dominate the present world.

They will find their model in themselves and in the repressed experiences of revolutionary history. The Palestinian question is too serious to be left to the states, that is, to the colonels. It is too close to the two basic questions of modern revolution — internationalism and the state — for any existing force to be able to provide an adequate solution. Only an Arab revolutionary movement that is resolutely internationalist and anti-state can dissolve the state of Israel while gaining the support of that state's exploited masses. And only through the same process will it be able to dissolve all the existing Arab states and create Arab unity through the power of the Councils.

# AN ANTI-STATIST OUTLOOK

## A New (Jewish) Fascism and its Opposition

"I was starting to be familiar with the traits of the Nazis who'd almost captured me: the racism that reduced human beings to their genealogical connections over five or six generations, the crusading nationalism that considered the rest of humanity an obstacle, the Gleichschaltung that cut off the individual's freedom to choose, the technological efficiency that made small humans mere fodder for great machines, the bully militarism that pitted walls of tanks against a cavalry and exacted a hundred times the losses it sustained, the official paranoia that pictured the enemy, poorly armed townspeople and villagers, as a nearly omnipotent conspiracy of cosmic scope. But I didn't see that these traits had anything to do with America or Israel."

—Fredy Perlman, *Anti-Semitism and the Beirut Pogrom*<sup>1</sup>

by Unruelee

In January, a commanding officer in the Israeli Defense Force revealed that his units were studying the German Army's experiences during the World War II battle for the Warsaw Ghetto.<sup>2</sup> His explanation was that however shocking this may sound, seizing a densely populated refugee camp or the kasbah in Nablus, for example, presented logistical problems for an army trying to reduce casualties.

No worries, it's just a question of efficiency.

By the time I read about this a few months later, these studies were being fully utilized during the April Israeli invasion and re-occupation of the West Bank. Overwhelming forces entered city after city, enforcing a total curfew by shooting at anybody found in the streets.

More than half the houses in big cities like Ramallah and Nablus have been searched, often accompanied by looting and wanton destruction of property. In "sensitive" areas, especially refugee camps, these visits often included the mass arrest of the entire male population. After a few days at improvised detention camps, most of the prisoners would be set free to get home by foot under the deadly conditions of the curfew. The rest were taken to the notorious Ansar-3 Detention Center, tortured to make them confess and implicate others, and "sorted out" for prolonged prison terms. "Administrative Detention" like this can go on for years

without trial, according to Israeli law.

It is not possible to convey in a few paragraphs the extent of the damage being done:<sup>3</sup> the civilian infrastructure is being deliberately destroyed. School records have been ruined, a center for blind children shelled, ambulances and countless peoples' cars flattened by tanks. In Jenin alone, at least 26 civilians were killed, many of them aged or handicapped people trapped in homes being demolished by army bulldozers. Almost a million people have been held under curfews without access to basic necessities for weeks, only to have it briefly lifted and resumed for weeks more.

Yesterday, on the 68th day of curfew in Nablus, the Israeli army occupied the Red Crescent center in the city, the Palestinian Medical Relief building was surrounded, and Israeli troops prevented ambulances from moving freely. Already 70 Palestinians have died because they were prevented from receiving medical treatment. Assassinations occur daily with a high civilian toll.

### A modern Warsaw Ghetto

Essentially, Israel is administering a modern Warsaw Ghetto on the West Bank and in Gaza. They've learned their lessons from history very well.

This age-old project of deporting, expropriating and exterminating human beings is never pretty, but there is something especially stomach-churning to me in that this new fascism is being done by Jews. Part of that is personal, because I'm Jewish. But I don't think that's all of it: the persecution of the Jews has infamous status, and has often been seen as the historical epitome of brutal discrimination.

The response to this, however, was the formation of a new nation state which began its own pattern of land dispossession and oppression and the creation of a national myth in which the invader/settlers portray themselves as being persecuted by their victims much in the manner of those who had tortured them. It is a tragedy with echoes throughout history.

"I don't compare the Israeli government to the Nazis anymore," says forest activist Mikal Jakubal, following his April 2002 trip to the West Bank where he dodged Israeli bullets and helped with medical relief.

"What I'm saying now... is all empires do and the Nazis are only unique in that they ap-

plied their famous German ingenuity and thoroughness in such a way as to give us a near-perfect image of the, um, glory that is the state."

"Traitor,!" was a frequent response from many people, according to Fredy Perlman in the essay quoted above, when he mentioned "pogrom" and "Beirut" in the same sentence following the 1982 Ariel Sharon-led attack on Lebanon and the slaughter of 20,000 civilians. Similarly, anyone effectively getting the truth out about today's pogroms in the West Bank and Gaza risks coming under heavy fire from Israel's defenders.



Breaking the stereotype: Ta'ayush activists (Israeli Jews and Arabs), along with members from Rabbis for Human Rights and the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions bring food and supplies to the people in the South Hebron area, January 11, 2002.

photo/Not In My Name; see [www.nimn.org](http://www.nimn.org)

British journalist Robert Fisk writes, "In 26 years in the Middle East, I have never read so many vile and intimidating messages addressed to me. Many now demand my death."<sup>4</sup>

But as they give the lie to the notion that Israel's critics are just anti-Semites, muckraking Jews are getting it with a special vengeance. Activists and writers such as Dennis Bernstein, Barbara Lubin and Adam Shapiro are deluged with such messages as: "You mother-fucking self-hating Jewish piece of shit. Hitler killed the wrong Jews. He should have killed your parents. . . . God willing, Arab terrorists will cut you to pieces. . . ."<sup>5</sup>

After Shapiro, an International Solidarity Movement activist, described to CNN the Gestapo-like tactics being carried out by the Israeli army when he was under siege in Yassar Arafat's Ramallah headquarters, his parents in New York City had to flee their home following threats by right-wing Zionists. With this particular nationalist project, the Jewish "Race" becomes a club to which membership is mandatory and all must march in step.

Appallingly, some people take the construct of a Jewish "Race" seriously as an existing entity, and even proclaim its superiority. Thus, in a murder trial of a Jewish boy who randomly shot a 13-year-old Palestinian girl, Rabbi Yitzhak Ginsburgh, a settler militant, defended him with these words: "The people of Israel must rise and declare in public that a Jew and a goy are not, God forbid, the same. Any trial that assumes that Jews and goyim are equivalent is a travesty of justice. . . something is special about Jewish DNA. . . There is something infinitely more holy and unique about Jewish life than non-Jewish life."<sup>6</sup>

Although this racist view of Palestinians is prevalent among the most fanatically religious of the settlers, polls show that the majority of Israelis and even the settlers themselves express a willingness to withdraw from the Occupied Territories and recognize a Palestinian state. However, Sharon and a core of rightists still dream of an ethnically cleansed "Greater Israel, though paradoxically, the prime minister's poll numbers remain high.

Unfortunately, many American Jews (most of whom identify themselves as liberal), have been manipulated into defending the repressive policies of the Likud government through the intense pressure brought upon U.S. politicians and the corporate media by groups such as the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

### The Opposition

But there is growing opposition in both Israel and the United States and around the world. There are many inspiring aspects of the Palestine solidarity and anti-war movements: international activists defying the Occupation, blocking tanks or delivering water to the terrorized in Jenin; the occupation of the Israeli consulate

in San Francisco by the Jewish Voices for Peace group; the increasing number of army refuseniks, draft refusers and insubordinates in the IDF. It is conceivable that multiplying these sorts of pressures may force Israel to negotiate a withdrawal to the pre-1967 borders and recognition of some form of a Palestinian state.

### Anti-statists must have no illusions

However important a demand for withdrawal from the Territories is in order to end the immediate oppression of the Palestinians, anti-statists must have no illusions about this nationalist thrust. It is hard to be enthusiastic about partial projects. Even on the "realistic" terms of the modern world's absurd and illegitimate ruling institutions, Israel could securely get out of the occupied territories and still remain the obscene, ethnic, theocratic democracy that it is.<sup>7</sup>

Doesn't a campaign towards the limited end of Israeli withdrawal ultimately lend credence to ideologies of established powers which should be abolished altogether? It's hard for anyone to campaign solely for the suspension of U.S. military aid for these ongoing horrors who would prefer to fight for the end of all governments.

The crux of the Israel/Palestine insanity rests heavily on the lack of basic information about the situation. The corporate mass media's dis- and mis-information acts to ensure that the American public continues to support the U.S. government's financing and arming of Israel. Speaking critically about Israel can be a big step in itself. Thankfully, more people are starting to do it, taking stands in many different ways.

As a basic primer, an excellent resource is the 60-page, "The Missing Peace: Truth and Justice in Israel/Palestine," by Ronni and Laila, a childhood Zionist and a Palestinian American respectively, now housemates in Seattle. The pamphlet has something new for anyone, packed as it is with succinct analysis from many sources, as well as interviews they did in Palestine with activists and former prisoners who had been tortured. It's both intellectually sharp and personal.

Send \$2 to: The Missing Peace, POB 28833, Seattle WA 98118.

### ENDNOTES

1. "Anti-Semitism and the Beirut Pogrom," 1982, Fredy Perlman, in *Anything Can Happen*, 1992, Phoenix Press. This essay first appeared in the Fifth Estate and later appeared as a Black & Red pamphlet. It will soon be reprinted by B&R.
2. Quoted in Ha'aretz article by Amir Oren, a senior military commentator for the paper, January 25, 2002.
3. For a good account in detail see the new issue of *The Other Israel* magazine, titled "Inside the Maelstrom," [http://other\\_israel.tripod.com/](http://other_israel.tripod.com/). Or POB 2542, Holon 58125, Israel.
4. "Why Does John Malkovich Want to Kill Me?," Robert Fisk, *Independent* (London), May 14, 2002. It's interesting to note that only Israel's defenders from outside Israel have been less than polite in their disagreement.
5. "Strangling the Messengers: Palestine and the Price of Truth-Telling," Dennis Bernstein, *CovertAction Quarterly* 73, Summer 2002.
6. Quoted in Israel Shahak's response to a critic of his text "Jewish Fundamentalism" at [www.cactus48.com/jewishlaw.html](http://www.cactus48.com/jewishlaw.html).
7. Many Israelis would prefer not. See *The Other Israel*, op cit.



### Middle East Peace & Justice Resources

For more information and to get involved:

- International Solidarity Movement  
[www.palsolidarity.org](http://www.palsolidarity.org)
- SUSTAIN (Stop US Tax Aid to Israel Now)  
[www.sustaincampaign.org](http://www.sustaincampaign.org)
- Not in My Name - [www.nimn.org](http://www.nimn.org)
- American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee  
[www.aadc.org](http://www.aadc.org)
- Jerusalem Indymedia - [www.jerusalem.indymedia.org](http://www.jerusalem.indymedia.org)

I pledge obedience  
to the flag  
of a desecrated America,  
and to the multinationals  
who let us stand  
one nation  
of underdogs,  
who are exploitable,  
with liberty and justice  
for sale  
—Ron B.

I pledge allegiance  
to the bargains of  
the United Consumers  
at Wal-Mart  
& to the stockholders  
for whom they scam  
One Supercenter  
under Sam  
unconscienable  
with union busting &  
sweatshops  
for all  
—Doug Graves

I pledge Resistancel  
to the rising tide  
of Fascism in America,  
And to the "New Global  
Order" for which they  
plan;  
One State,  
Corporate, Monopolisitic,  
& Invincible,  
With Injury & Penury  
for all  
(below the rank of  
Manager)  
—Dr. J in Santa Fe

# PLEDGES



—Richard Mock

I pledge allegiance to & wrap myself up  
in the flag of the United States Against  
Anything UnAmerican & to the  
Republicans for which it stands, two  
nations, under Jesus, rich against poor,  
with curtailed liberty and justice for all  
except blacks, homosexuals, women who  
want abortions, Communists, welfare  
queens, tree huggers, feminazis, illegal  
immigrants, children of illegal immigre-  
ants, & you if you don't watch your step.  
—Matt Groening

I pledge allegiance to the mind  
of the united seers of wilderness &  
to the psychosis we've left behind  
I say, You are fear. You are useless. Evaporate!  
once and for all. —Richard Loranger

# Surrealism, Poetry, & Anarchy: An introduction

by May Thistle

This issue's focus on poetry and surrealism evolved in a surrealist fashion as synchronicity and serendipity weaved this theme into being. Certainly, our friendship with anarchist writer and anthologist Ron Sakolsky played a part as we anticipated the release of his newest book *Surrealist Subversions*.


Sometimes activist 'zines can come off as too serious and self-important. I feel we need a balance in our paper: not just analysis, critique, and exposure of institutional atrocity but also examples of creative, playful thought and action. Thus, this gift.

Specific to surrealism, I have an admiration and possibly innate affinity for its extra-rational, collaborative, and convivial components. More attitude than activism through living and dreaming, surrealism might seem aimless. It's not. Like an iron beam in the swirl of mighty mist, it's capable of cracking illusions and opening more than a few minds.

Ron Sakolsky's in-depth introduction to his massive anthology is called "Surrealist Subversion In Chicago: The Forecast Is Hotter Than Ever." In this, he tracks the curvilinear journey of contemporary American surrealism. He elaborates, "By unleashing poetic fusillades aimed directly at the heart of bourgeois complacency, [Surrealists] have always sought to reveal, and then break, the bars of the prison called miserabilism." Further, Sakolsky sees surrealism as nothing less than the "Wild Child of Mother Anarchy," and it is the surrealist-anarchist connection that Sakolsky's book traces and triumphs.

In the words of a regular FE contributor, "our adventure is...to be found in...that ineffable, numinous relationship with an intelligent, animate world that only a renewed mythopoetics can approach." Rejecting and reinventing the ancient archetypes, then inviting them for tea. Invoking insurrection through inspiration. Fueling dissidence through play and poetics. Cutting away from the herd though finding pleasure in collective scheming. Celebrating individuality, diversity and eccentricity while tinkering with ways to bust out of tedium. We uplift one another as we ignite imagination and draw way outside the lines. Beyond reason. Embracing the random. Watching reality bend.

I hope that our paper will continue to highlight opportunities where folks have taken the time to conspire not only in rants,



## WHY SAY NO?

Against the laughable legion of puritanical movie-stars, athletes, TV celebrities and assorted politicians' wives who tell us to "just say no" to everything from sex and drugs to dropping out of school, the surrealists put forth for the consideration of the public these modest

### IMMEDIATE DEMANDS

1. Absolute sexual freedom, eroticization of everyday life, expansion of pleasure uninhibited by bourgeois notions of guilt and duty.
2. Global supersession of wage-slavery by the cultivation of inspired laziness.
3. Emancipation of children from all forms of patriarchal domination.
4. Expansion of wilderness everywhere, at all times, by any and all means.
5. Destruction of Family, Church and State — the indispensable first step toward a pleasurable life for all.

### THE SURREALIST GROUP

Chicago \* August 1987

demos, and protests, but in cafes, communes, and bedrooms (okay, living rooms). We can't always count on breaking down the walls of institutions so heavily armed, so sometimes we must tunnel or catapult or slip through the cracks. That demands expanding and sharing power, wisdom, humor and humility.

—August 2002

"It is time to let the cat of hallucination out of the bag of reality. Long live the impossible!"

(Chicago Surrealists)

# Benjamin Péret & the Ecological Imagination

by Don LaCoss

Those who believe in a staunch ecological stance that subverts the dominant patterns of objectification, degradation, subordination, and commodification should take time to understand the revolutionary force of poetry.

Among those who can help in this regard are the surrealists. When one scrapes below the surface definitions of surrealism provided by universities, museums, and art dealers, one can begin to sense the insurrectionary thirst for liberty that is the core tenet for which surrealism fights.

Dalí and Magritte, for example, are very marginal figures in the movement who were ejected for their reactionary views. Oddly, Dalí and Magritte are the two most commonly marketed as surrealist artists in the US.

Surrealism is something else—it's not an escape from reality, but a desperate bid to recover social realities in all their intensity and then transform them into deeper, higher, and more real levels of reality. This is accomplished by delivering the means of production (material and mental) into the hands of persons most exploited by the conventional, consensual social system built and maintained by the white, patriarchal, Christian bourgeoisie. Surrealism subverts the system that has relentlessly robbed people of their ability to imagine alternatives and wild possibilities by denigrating perception, desire, instinct, and intuition.

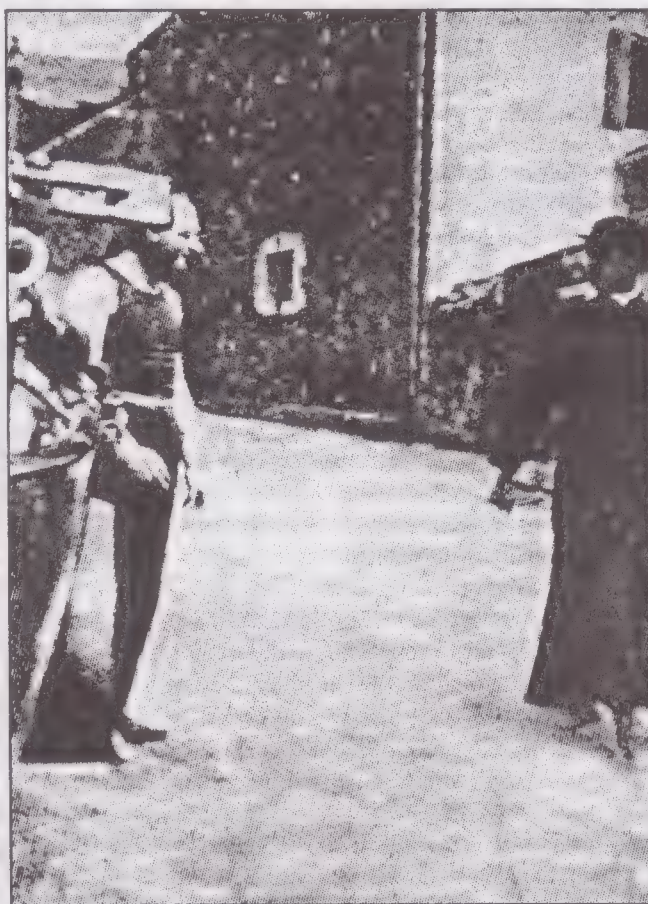
To combat the poisonous narrow conditions of modern life under capitalism, the surrealists braided together the complexities of individual revolt and the handsome, many-headed beast of collective rebellion. They believed that any revolution for social justice is doomed to failure if it does not allow for the unthinkable, unanticipated models of emancipation that poetry propagates.

Poetry and revolution are as intimately integral to one another as wind and rain, turning words and phrases inside out and knotting them together into stormy new topological geometries. It is language at its most evolved and primordial state,

beyond and before the blinders of ideological policing and economic determinism. Like the natural world, poetry is restlessly animate and sublimely turbulent—a riot of energies, colors, sounds and realities that scream out alternatives to the standard concepts and presuppositions of scientific, ethical, and aesthetic vocabularies.

One of the most militant of the surrealist poets was Benjamin Péret. In 1945, he wrote about how poetry serves the revolution only when the revolution serves poetry:

**A famous 1926 photograph captures Péret, an unrepentant anti-clericalist, spitting either insults or mucus at a priest.**



"The poet battles against all oppression: primarily, that of one being over another, as well as the oppression of the mind by religious, philosophical and social dogma. The poet struggles so that humanity may achieve a more perfect knowledge of itself and its world."

This does not conform to the idea that poets put poetry at the service of political action, however revolutionary it might be. Just by being a poet, one becomes a revolutionary who must fight on all planes, both on the field of poetry by the most appropriate means and on the field of social action, without confusing the two terrains of action. To do so would be to risk a restoration of confusion that is meant to be dissipated, and by this one would cease to be a poet, or which is to say, a revolutionary.

Apropos to my comments about poetry and radical ecology, I want to call attention to an overlooked collection of essays by Benjamin Péret

called *Natural History* (originally, *Histoire naturelle*). Falling somewhere between poetry, cosmogony, and mythology, Péret's *Natural History* is not only an important contribution to surrealism's thinking on the revolutionary restoration, emancipation, and recreation of wildness and wilderness, but it also can be read as an experiment in radical environmentalist poetry that provides an interesting counterpoint and complement to many of the other texts of radical ecology being passed around today.

## A pivotal personality

A pivotal, pioneering personality in surrealism before and after World War II, Péret spent at least forty years of his life working with anti-state communists and anarcho-syndicalists around the world. Motivated by protests against imperialist wars in North Africa, Péret joined the French Communist Party around 1926. Already by 1927, he was living in Brazil where he helped organize an "oppositionist" (anti-Stalinist) communist league in Rio de Janeiro. In 1932, Brazilian authorities imprisoned him, then deported him back to France for his revolutionary activities. In Paris, he bounced between small, anti-Stalinist communist organizations before signing on to the Internationalist Workers Party in 1936. During the revolution in Spain, he worked as a go-between for Trotskyist, far-left communist, and anarcho-syndicalist militias in France, Brazil, Spain, and Mexico. He also served in the Amigos des Durutti militia on the Aragon Front to fight against fascists, counter-revolutionaries, and Stalinists in 1937.

A famous 1926 photograph captures Péret, an unrepentant anticlericalist, spitting either insults or mucus at a priest. But the victory of Franco's clerico-fascist regime, precipitated Péret's return to France, and when the Nazis invaded, he was drafted by the French army to work as a clerk in a municipal office in Nantes. Unbelievably, his job allowed him access to lists of politically "suspicious" persons being compiled by the police, so he spent his time substituting the names of priests for those of subversives on the intelligence reports. He also built up a clandestine Trotskyist cell, which was later broken up by the police, and resulted in his brief incarceration. After bribing Nazi prison guards, Péret was able to return undercover to Occupied Paris.

Denounced as a threat to public safety by a local collaborationist newspaper, he fled to Marseilles and briefly combined forces with the antifascist underground before making it into exile in New York City. US authorities refused to issue visas to him and his companion, Remedios Varo, because of their revolutionary political pasts. So the couple went on to Mexico, where they connected with a community of exiled Spanish Trotskyists and civil war veterans. There, working alongside Natalia Sedova (Trotsky's comrade and second wife) and Grandizo Munis (formerly of the left-opposition Leninists in Spain and a veteran of the Amigos des Durutti), he produced bulletins critical of the Fourth International's theorists and bureaucrats. In the summer of 1947, after the Fourth International formally endorsed Stalin's USSR, Péret abandoned the organization.

Subsequently, Péret worked within a number of ultra-left groups in Paris comprised of anti-Stalinist veterans of the Spanish Civil War, Mexican anarcho-communists, and radical Vietnamese anti-imperialists. One of these groups was the International Workers Union, an organization aligned to the "Gallienne-Pennetier tendency" of Trotskyism whose membership included Munis, Jean Malaquais, Sania Gontarbert, Marcel Pennetier, and Serge Bricianer. He also wrote columns and signed surrealist proclamations that appeared in some of the dozen or so major anarchist newspapers produced in France at the time.

Until his death in 1959, Péret toyed with ideas on autonomist

Marxism, council communism and a number of other left-communist internationalist issues in brochures and newspaper columns. In a glowing eulogy, the revolutionary direct democracy *Socialisme ou barbarie* group hailed him as one of the "very rare creative spirits" who "defended his ideas" daily and continually renewed "his refusal...to accept the least compromise with bourgeois or Stalinist infamy." Yet in spite of this, his uncompromising ideas and creations remain largely unexplored by contemporary practitioners of radical theory, including his oddly beautiful "natural history" written between 1945 and 1958.

## Natural History and Surrealist Ecology

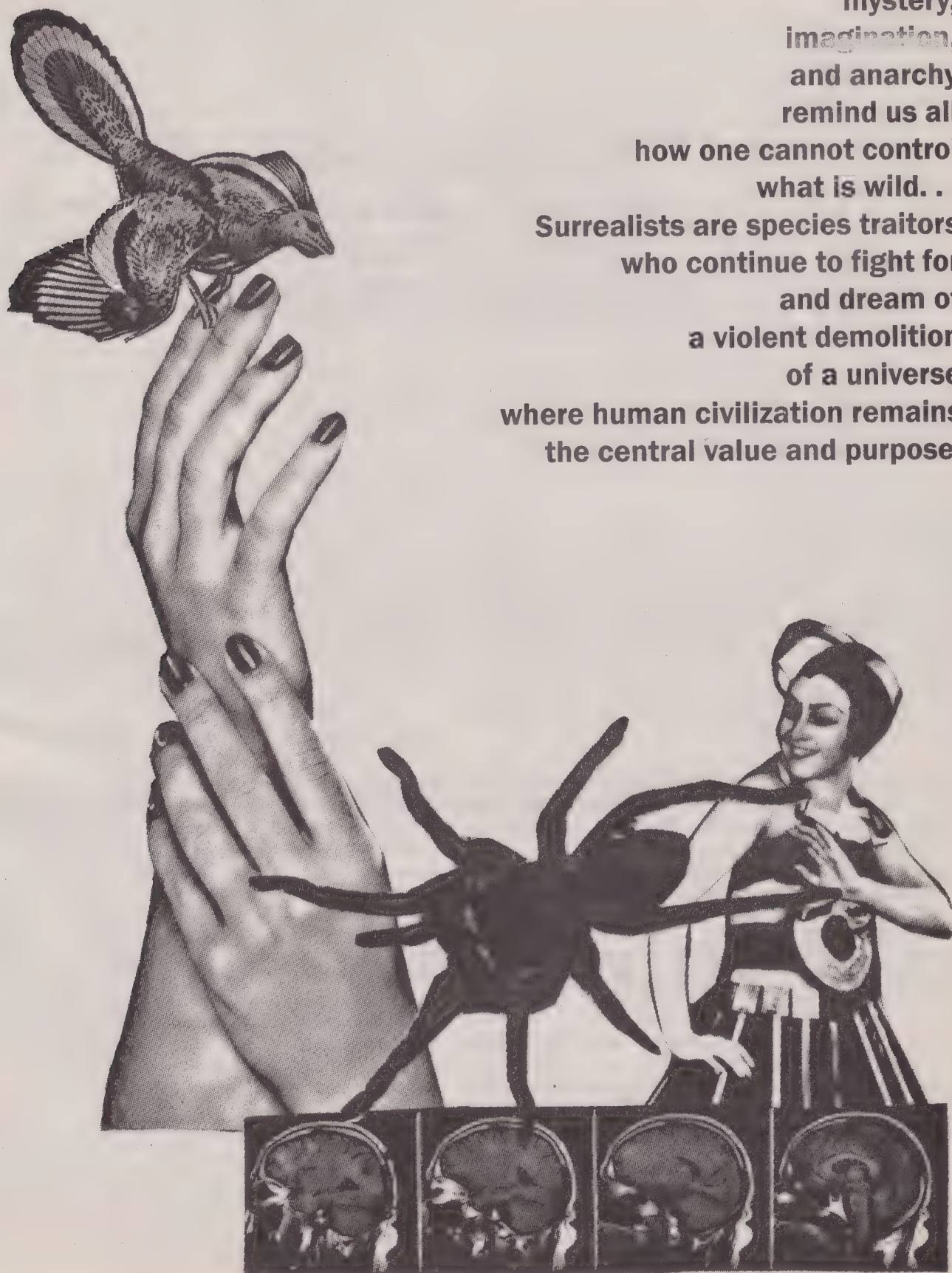
To appraise Péret's *Natural History* as a text of surrealist ecology, one can begin by reflecting upon the attributes and meaning of "natural history" as a discipline of study. In these days of university "ologies" (biology, zoology, climatology, paleontology, physical anthropology), the term "histoire naturelle" is old-fashioned, almost pre-scientific (in the most modern sense of the word "science")—in other words, pre-industrial, pre-capitalist, and low-tech in its technological accoutrements. In contrast to today's scientists most of whom refuse to form a hypothesis for controlled experiments without funding from a major corporation, natural historians—since the Roman writer, Pliny the Elder—tend to be obsessed amateurs skilled in the art of observation who meticulously detail even the most obvious elements of the world around them.

Thus, at least ideally, natural history has come to be understood as a systematic consideration of animal, vegetable, and mineral phenomena based on close observation by the writer. (Incidentally, Pliny died while investigating first-hand the volcanic eruption at Pompeii in 79 CE.) The empirical and materialistic study of natural history covers all forms of organic and inorganic existence: stars, planets, plants, minerals, fossil remains, birds, mammals, and insects are all fair game.

Natural history changed considerably in the mid-1700s, thanks to the aristocratic sycophant Count Georges-Louis Leclerc Buffon, who produced a sprawling forty-four volume *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière* (1749-88). Buffon's buffoonery quickly earned him an esteemed place among the snooty firmament of the European Enlightenment, and most twentieth-century schoolchildren in France—even a dropout underachiever like Péret—would have had at least a little of his work shoved down their throats. Buffon's studies are of value insofar as they discuss descent with modification and causative influences present in environments, including migration patterns, geography, and population density, thereby providing a vital cornerstone for evolutionists such as Darwin to build upon later. Regrettably, though, Buffon curdles these innovations by adding his own loathsome inflections to the eighteenth-century debates on "race."

The only real use in mentioning Buffon here is to juxtapose his version of natural history to the essays that make up Péret's. Whereas Buffon provides anemic, mechanistic, and reasonably dull explanations for life and nature through carefully detailed accounts and sharply realistic illustrations, Péret's texts are fiery and funny, playfully satirizing the sometimes pretentious

Péret's tales of  
mystery,  
imagination,  
and anarchy  
remind us all  
how one cannot control  
what is wild. . .  
Surrealists are species traitors  
who continue to fight for  
and dream of  
a violent demolition  
of a universe  
where human civilization remains  
the central value and purpose.



conventions of the "natural historian" genre in very deliberate ways.

Péret's assembled essays, "The Four Elements," "The Mineral Kingdom," "The Vegetable Kingdom," and "The Animal Kingdom," demonstrate an unremarkable taxonomic scheme as far as natural histories go, but one that diverges sharply from any other from its opening lines which describe the world as

"not spherical but shaped like a bowl, and is one of the breasts of heaven. The other is to be found at the center of the Milky Way." This natural history rings more like the popular myths, legends, and folk tales of Mesoamerica that Péret anthologized, or episodes from the ancient Yucatan Jaguar Prophet that appear in the Book

of Chilám Balám that Péret translated in 1955. In fact, much of the action in *Natural History* seems pregnant with portent, like the encoded allegorical formulae of medieval alchemical treatises that synthesized philosophy, chemistry, and physics in the service of radical moral change. One need only be a skilled adept to decipher its recipe.

### Four Elements

Divided further into "Earth," "Air," "Water," and "Fire" subsections, "Four Elements" spells out the most unnatural explanations and recountings of these allegedly foundational building blocks of nature. Air, Péret explains, secretes pepper that accumulates in the upper atmosphere to give stars their sparkle; evaporated sea water leaves behind female silks that, after one thousand years of maturation, produce four litters of brandy glasses a year; and damp, trembling stones exposed to sunlight yield "soft, sweet, velvety and perfumed" fire "currently used for burning down churches."

Water, air, earth and fire combined to create the world in "The Mineral Kingdom." But rather than the graceful ideals of classical legend, Péret's elements are capricious, vain, and rambunctious, brawling with one another like demonic Three Stooges. The tumult of "The Vegetable Kingdom" is related with the same cruel charm: "Disorder reigned under the cover of the night. The honeysuckle came from nowhere zigzagging to escape a pine that was tilting at it and threatening to impale it. A pansy was sitting astride a heliotrope pulling out its hair in handfuls. . . . The whole place was an appalling free-for-all, an incredible orgy."

The last chapter, "The Animal Kingdom," the final evolutionary stage in Péret's creation myth, is not only a wicked inversion of the Book of Genesis, but also a radical assertion that nature exists for its own sake well outside of the needs and largesse of humans. It opens with such a revolting scene of havoc that the agave—a significant plant in Mexican culture, among other things, as a central ingredient in the making of tequila—takes it upon itself to relieve the misery, and does so by accidentally creating an anteater, a grasshopper, a cod, and a woodpecker. Each time a new creature appears, the agave reacts with surprise and delight, a far cry from the self-

centered braggart in Genesis who wills things into existence with nothing but humorless ostentation. In fact, Péret mocks the anthropocentrism of the Judeo-Christian god when he provides the agave with all-too-human qualities: while soaking a giraffe in grease in order to make "a sparrow or a frigate bird", the agave bends down to retie its footwear and snaps a shoelace, the discarded useless end of which transforms into a dog-producing primrose bush. The agave also manipulates

grammatical, philosophical, scientific, and literary concepts during its paroxysms of creation: sophisms, alexandrines, synonyms, prepositions, Archimedes' principle, and circumflex accents combine with panthers, pelicans, pinecones, and rhinoceroses. During a fight and yelling match between a starfish, a mouse, and a heron,

the agave finally decides to create a man, carving him from a prune and telling him to find a wife on his own, which the prune-man attempts with honey from a hive.

My synopsis does not fully capture the wonder, humor, and rebellious zest of Péret's *Natural History*, but it does help to show how the essays could be approached as foundational text of a radical ecological agenda. Péret's casting of his essays under the rubric of "kingdoms" is a farcical swipe at the classification system of eighteenth-century botanist Carolus Linnaeus, the creator of the orderly, rigid taxonomy used by humans to identify and record plant and animal life. In contrast to the self-serving human urge to force order upon the world—the very notion of a "natural history" is supremely conceited in assuming that nature can be squeezed into a human-forged narrative of change over time the kingdoms imagined by Péret are unruly and regicidal, ungoverned and ungovernable save for a chaotic, sleepwalker's logic outside human ken.

As compared to Buffon's, Péret's *Natural History* is an anti-natural history drawn from observing environments much too complex and too alien to fit into storylines produced by a civilization anxious to keep homo sapiens at the apex of the evolutionary pyramid. In this age when computerized models used for mapping (and later, patenting, before finally invading them) genomic patterns claim the ability to unlock the secrets of life itself, Péret's tales of mystery, imagination, and anarchy remind us all how one cannot control what is wild. Some environmentalists seek a world where nature engages with human nature in a dance of complementary unity, rather than being locked in a death match for superiority as rivals, but surrealists are species traitors who continue to fight for and dream of a violent demolition of a universe where human civilization remains the central value and purpose.

A first step in this direction is poetry that welds together the wilderness of the unconscious with the wildness of nature. The great surrealist poet Aimé Césaire asserted this very position from his tropical home in Martinique while the abominations of World War II befouled Europe, Africa, and Asia. "The unconscious that all true poetry calls upon is the receptacle of original relationships that bind us to nature," he wrote. "Within

**Péret's tales of mystery, imagination, and anarchy remind us all how one cannot control what is wild.**

us, all the ages of humankind. Within us, animal, vegetable, mineral." The autocratic rationalism and scientific snobbery of Enlightenment celebrities like Buffon found its oh-so-logical conclusion in the sophisticated railroad timetables that crisscrossed the forests of Eastern Europe to supply the factories of concentration camps and the genie of technological atrocity unbottled at the Trinity proving grounds in New Mexican desert. Although he does not mention these things, Césaire implies them and more when he demands that people come to grips with "the superiority of the tree over humankind, of the tree that says 'yes' over a humankind who says 'no'. The superiority of the tree that is consent over a humankind who is evasiveness; the superiority of the tree which is rootedness and deepening over a humankind who is agitation and malfeasance. And that is why humankind does not blossom at all." In the early 1990s, surrealist poet-painter Penelope Rosemont applied Césaire's philosophy in a short essay that scans the headlines of the day and finds the correspondences linking the Los Angeles uprising, the fight to defend women's reproductive freedom, and the attempts to protect the spotted owl from extinction. "The struggle for women's reproductive rights—for women's freedom—is also the struggle for sexual freedom for all; and for the end of war, white supremacy and all oppression; for the glorious diversity of wildlife on a living Earth. We shall win or be defeated together." This is vision of revolutionary equality

where there are no hierarchies of priority or superiority, but rather a mutual, organic alliance for existence.

Despite the savage escalation in surveillance, harassment, and oppression by federal, state, and local police forces since September 11, the eco-resistance boldly continues to strike back against suburban sprawl, deforestation, agribusiness tyranny, and genetically-engineered crops. "We need no more words on the matter," Edward Abbey famously wrote. "Sentiment without action is the ruin of the soul. One brave deed is worth a thousand books." But direct action without ideas can ruin more than the soul; we should always be on the lookout for new sentiments, and continue to circulate them among ourselves in order to keep up with shifting topographies of direct action and State repression. Péret's *Natural History* may not appear to be as immediately utilitarian as the ELF's *Setting Fires With Electric Timers* or that handy manual to biotech crop-pulling, *The Nighttime Gardener*, but all efforts should be made to find a poetry that conveys a vision of wilderness that recognizes the necessity of emancipation—both esoteric and exoteric—from imposed, artificial constraints. As Romanticist revolutionary William Blake wrote, "Nature is Imagination itself."

—Don LaCoss (depthsquad@hushmail.com)

## Some surrealist reviews by Carroll S.

*Communicating Vessels*  
July/August 2002

(\$3 from Mutual Aid Portland PO  
Box 7328 Portland ME 04112)

**Blending marvelous manifesto with biting analysis, CV is an excellent anarcho-surrealist-communist 'zine from the northeast. Mixing reprints, unsigned narratives, and personal confessions, CV clearly believes in abandoning this society to create life on different terms. While the writings on Palestine, Iraq, economics, etc. were intelligent and interesting, I found the personal pieces more compelling. Of particular note, "The Hellish Underworld of Day Labor" is a reflective critique of the author's foray into the urban, day-slave racket that exploits unskilled temp workers in**

**intensely humiliating situations. All in all, a highly recommended read.**

*Surrealist Experiences: 1001 Dawns,  
221 Midnight*

by Penelope Rosemont  
Foreword by Rikki Ducornet  
( \$12 from Black Swan Press PO Box  
6424 Evanston IL 60204)

**Penelope Rosemont, a co-conspirator in the Chicago Surrealists, embodies art, action, and vision. She defines surrealism as a way of "challenging one's self, of transcending all rationalized excuses for saying yes to miserabilism and tolerating the intolerable" and lives this challenge within these pages. This anthology of Penelope's prose combines essays, rants, manifestos, games, theory, and more to dance on the perimeter of consciousness where technique, critique, and dissident mystique converge in poetic revolt.**

**In playful yet precise language, she embraces pleasure and freedom, attacks work and white supremacy. An anarchist before she knew anarchism and a surrealist before she knew surrealism, Penelope Rosemont's life has been an escapade. This book represents Rosemont's daily experience as an experiment in revolution, nurturing the energy that guided her at twenty-three to quit work and school and head for Paris to "meet the surrealists" and follow her dreams. As readers, may we also follow dreams and revolt.**



By MK Shibek

I first encountered Andre Breton's surrealist manifestoes as a young anarchist in the late 80s, and was attracted to the ideas within.

Surrealist poetry had a familiar resonance: I recognized how psychic automatism existed in my own experience. The quality of that expressive revelation reminded me of how long sentences, scenes and pictures would unfold before me, independent of conscious direction, as I was near sleep. Breton even mentions such hypnagogic phenomena in the first manifesto. But I had no idea anything like a surrealist movement still existed until I saw a review of Arsenal: Surrealist Subversions in a midwestern anarchist publication.

I wasted no time in ordering the fourth issue of the Chicago Surrealist Group's journal. The contents of Arsenal were a catalyst for a new approach not only to creativity, but to all of life as well, which complimented my punk/anarchist sensibility.

More than an art movement, surrealism, like anarchism, appealed to my sense of intuitive rejection of the socialized ego identity wage slave complex, and affirmed that reality included much more than what I'd been raised to expect.

The demand for revolution as collective creation, where personal and social restraints are undermined by a materialized imagination, reflected aspirations, and seemingly impossible hopes. Surrealism draws from peak moments in everyday life and in history, and informs the content of our dreams as they attempt to realize themselves.

As a college student I explored automatic writing and objective chance, pursued various creative/destructive endeavors, and issued agitational leaflets, but other than a few casually interested friends, I was unable to find, or form a truly surrealist group. A few years later, I moved to the west coast and, with Kayenne Sevaratim, co-created Razor Petalled Flowers, a series of public music and movement explorations in Portland, Oregon. We also gathered a dozen friends to disrupt trendy/recuperative Dada Ball.

Two texts prepared for the occasion were later reprinted in Drift Talisman, a "mini-magazine promoting surrealism, creative revolt and empowerment" which I first published in 1998. Shortly before the "Battle of Seattle," I visited surrealists from the Bay Area, Ribitch and Ronnie Burk, who'd collaborated with the Chicago group as well as the Blue Feathers project from Minneapolis.

In early 2001 I met lifelong Portland resident and Wobbly organizer Morgan Miller, whose conception of surrealism is

# The Exploding Rose:

## Surrealism in Portland

tied into an ongoing study of the land and culture of the Pacific Northwest, with inspiration from indigenous peoples and hidden/radical history. Not long after, we met Brandon Freels, author of two chapbooks and an FAQ on surrealism. Local events prompted a general gathering, and we met Victoria Garcia, who later became a consistent collaborator, along with several others who participated in the early activities of the Portland Surrealist Group, officially formed in August. We have weekly meetings at the Red and Black, a Wobbly café.

Affirming the continuity of surrealism by referring to the coelacanth—a fish once thought to be extinct—our introductory statement "Surrealism: A Fish" reads in part: "Our ambition is to make a surrealist presence in Portland by way of collaborative creation/revelation, and through a collective loathing of what culture has made itself: A fossilized vat of distilled boredom that works in opposition to life and the environment rather than reflecting them. We intend to exalt life through the sharing of dreams and ideas, hallucinations and intoxications, experiments, chance encounters, and more ... this is an attempt to start a conversation."

Word of mouth and placement of this flyer in surrealist books in bookstores helped us meet others. In addition to discussions about past and present surrealism, news events, sharing of dreams, ideas, and games, we made preliminary explorations of the city and became active in the online surrealist community. At their best our gatherings have been a generalized laboratory for subversion, realizing to some degree what painter Andre Masson called "the collective experience of individualism."

**More than an art movement, surrealism, like anarchism, appealed to my sense of intuitive rejection of the socialized ego identity wage slave complex, and affirmed that reality included much more than what I'd been raised to expect.**

Our second statement was in defense of a homeless community facing repression. "Direct Action is Contagious" supported Dignity Village and condemned the city and police as servants of capitalist property values: "The callous tyranny of Portland's political elite, and its business peers, is exposed as they continuously make villagers move with an underlying official sadism and disregard. Meanwhile, they masturbate over their plans for gentrification ... they dream of well-scrubbed, white consumers and commuters bustling about in a set made for working and shopping, with an ever-expanding police presence. Until we are able to live on the earth without restraint, and as long as the land is owned for profit, there will always be those ... who cannot pay the ever-increasing price of survival." This text was reprinted in The Rearguard, a radical student paper, and on Dignity's website.

continued on page 52

# The Feminine Letter :

## SOURCE OF ECSTASY

### An Open Letter to Alphabets

by Ody Saban

This story begins in the middle of a long night. I had been reading a tale in which the noted storyteller Baal Shem Tov appears and this was a dream I had in response to this reading.

A Jewish orphan born in Poland in 1698, Baal Shem Tov was a legendary personality of the heretical, Hassidim movement who sublimated in acts and words the aspirations of the meditant and wandering Jews.

He lived in a period of particularly devastating pogroms. The remnants of the Polish Jewish community were overcome with sadness and despair. But Baal Shem Tov didn't feel the despair. His tales and parables were filled with joy. He was convinced that by changing oneself using dreams and poetry, a human being was certainly able to change the world.

One of his tales recounts how he found himself exiled, a prisoner on an unknown distant island, where for company he had just one other person. This individual seemed to be both a scribe and a disciple. But Baal Shem Tov no longer had anything to talk about or anything to teach. He was weighed down, defeated. He couldn't even remember his own name. His scribe-disciple was in the same condition. Everything had disappeared: all knowledge, every memory. And Baal Shem Tov pleaded with his companion (about whom he knew nothing) to tell him who they were and why they were there; but the companion broke out in a frightening laugh and insisted that he could remember only one thing. If Baal Shem Tov wanted him to, he could recite the alphabet like a young schoolboy.

"We're saved!" cried Baal Shem Tov, "This is the happiest day of my life!" Painfully, the former scribe-disciple abandoned himself to the most profound despair. Half unconscious, he started to chant the beginning of the alphabet. Baal Shem Tov, in raptures, begged him to continue. Gradually, the two crazy men started playing with the alphabet and little by little they put together a new and extraordinary language: including whatever they considered remarkable and putting the rest aside. This is how they broke all chains and recreated the world according to their desires.

One night in a dream, like the storyteller, I found myself exiled on a deserted island, a total prisoner, without any memory. Unlike Baal Shem Tov, I was completely alone. The only thing I remembered was my female sexual organ. I vaguely recalled a few letters of a language that was not at all my mother

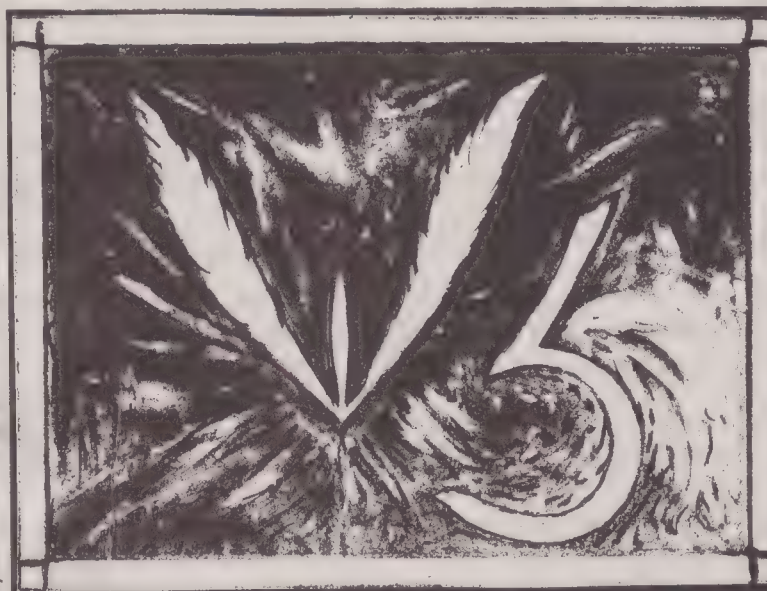
tongue. My family knew only Latino and Turkish—plus a little French and Italian. But I set about constructing an alphabet that, to me, seemed to resemble the Hebrew alphabet, the one I used to write my first texts as an adult.

But unlike Baal Shem Tov's ecstasy, an enormous anguish came over me. In this alphabet that I was reciting, I stumbled upon an absurd, shadowy, solitary letter. This was "ZAYIN" (ז), a letter when pronounced in Hebrew or

Arabic signifies the male sexual organ. (This is similar to English when pronouncing the letter "c" you refer to a large body of water.)

Suddenly, I too experienced a marvelous ecstasy and I retained this ecstasy when I awoke. I had just dreamed that my sterile and sorrowful alphabet was missing one puny letter, but this letter was one I was able to invent.

Coming from a Muslim country and part of a Jewish minority, I was delighted by my impulsive revision of the Hebrew and Arabic alphabets. In the mist, I traced this letter which had never signified anything. After this, everything followed directly. To this symbol I had



To this symbol I had drawn, I gave the name KOUS.

This is an Arabic word which has been adopted by modern Hebrew. In both languages it means the female sexual organ and it is the object of ridicule as well as gross insults.

drawn, I gave the name "KOUS" (ك). This is an Arabic word which has been adopted by modern Hebrew. In both languages it means the female sexual organ and it is the object of ridicule as well as gross insults. Thus "motherfucker" comes from "KOUSSMEK." Nevertheless, KOUS and ZAYN curiously arouse a great deal of passion one for the other.

In the mist, I began painting in black and white, but then a canvas appeared and was placed in front of me, colors next to me, and I found brushes in my hand. The "visible content" of these paintings is simple. In one of them, to the right of the letter KOUS there is a loving couple with a baby in the woman's arms. Beneath the letter KOUS is the letter LAMED (to study); to the right of LAMED is the letter SAMEH (joy). The visible content of the principal motif of this painting is simultaneously written and painted and they are easy to understand: "Study KOUS and experience ecstasy."

For now, KOUS is unpronounceable. Where will we place it in our words? KOUS has no specific sound. But now it exists in an alphabet. It incorporates words of love, rebellious cries, poetic songs. KOUS is able to link them inextricably.

Where should we place KOUS in the literal world? Let chance determine where. In any case, it is always different from itself and moves around all the time like Baal Shem Tov when he recreates the world.

Without eliminating ZAYIN to which it is linked, this new letter destroys the tyranny of ZAYIN's ghostly shadow. KOUS is able to undermine all languages. In every alphabet, even in an ideographic one, KOUS introduces the principles of gratuitousness and inexpressibility.

Possessed of all these powers, let this letter now make its way in the world. My dream can continue.

## SUBVERSIONS OF THE BODY: SEX, SEX WORK, AND GENDER IN SURREALISM

BY RUTH OPPENHEIM-ROTHSCHILD

**Miserabilist society wants our bodies. It wants docile bodies, controlled by fear, by class, and by silence. As surrealists, we desire absolute control of what we do with our bodies, what we want from our bodies, and how we see and present our bodies.**

**The institution of marriage must be destroyed. Surrealism has no room for man and wife, missionary-position monogamy, and likewise, no place for mainstream gay culture that wants to be as straight as it can possibly be. WE demand the right to fuck who we want to fuck, however we want to fuck them. This means total access to protection against STDs, birth control, and abortion-class should not control sexual possibilities. It means an end to abstinence-only, heterosexist sexual education in schools. It means the destruction of rape culture. It means following our desires. It means being able to verbalize and act on what we want.**

**It also means being able to use sex however we want to, including sex as work. Miserabilist society despises sex workers because they are not wage slaves. Sex workers do not have to answer to a boss, work a dull 9-to-5 job, compromise their principles, or in the words of Angela Carter, "rely on fraud to make a living." We demand the legalization of prostitution, without zoning, and unions for all forms of sex workers.**

**Miserabilism is also intent on controlling our genders. At birth, we are assigned Male or Female according to our genitalia. It wants so badly to enforce this dichotomy that intersexed babies, born without distinctly "male" or "female" genitalia, undergo cosmetic surgery at birth that frequently leaves them void of sexual feeling and the ability to have orgasms.**

**Just as surrealism refuses to see the world as white and black, good and evil, appropriate and inappropriate, we have to stop seeing gender as a binary system, and stop seeing biology as destiny. We are male, female, or both, or neither, and we will be these things without fear, without shame, without limitations, and without apologies.**

**What is surrealism about if not the refusal to apologize for our desires, our imaginations, and our lives? Surrealism is not a movement in political and social theory. It is constantly growing and changing, in our eternally active, always subversive, bodies.**

# Subversively Surreal

Ron Sakolsky's *Surrealist Subversions: Rants, Writings, and Images by the Surrealist Movement in the United States*. Autonomedia 2002. Please see page 55 for details on how to order your copy.

Review by  
MK Shibek and Brandon Freels

"Surrealism can help us break the constraints of social realism and take us to places where Marxism, Anarchism, and other isms in the name of revolution have rarely dared to venture."

—Robin D.G. Kelley

Since their formation in 1966, the Chicago Surrealist Group has remained the most visible and influential surrealist group in the English-speaking world.

Coming from radical and counter-cultural backgrounds such as the IWW, the Rebel Worker group, Solidarity Bookshop, and the Louis Lingg Memorial Chapter of the SDS, it's no surprise that Franklin and Penelope Rosemont and their allies have forcefully asserted surrealism's revolutionary essence to combat widespread misunderstanding, especially prevalent in the United States.

Many elements of the surrealist project have been down played or completely ignored by academia, the media, the art establishment and others who seek to keep us under control.

Co-opted and de-revolutionized, imitation surrealism has been the focus since Salvador Dali landed in New York, flaunting his popular appeal and consumerist/fascist sympathies. It's no wonder that it took so long for the first indigenous group in the US to arrive and start cleaning up the mess left by art critics and idiots.

In his introduction, anthologist Ron Sakolsky gives us a comprehensive overview of that first group's development, from the Roosevelt University Anti-Poetry Club and RU Wobblies, the Rosemont's meeting with Andre Breton and their months-long participation in the Paris Surrealist Group, through the infamous Gallery Bugs Bunny and Gallery Black

Swan on up to the present. Sakolsky illustrates how the Chicago Surrealist Group and its affiliates from coast to coast who compose the larger Surrealist Movement in the US have always had an organic, reciprocal relationship with not only workers' struggles and the anarchist movement but also a wide variety of heretical and librist currents.

This 750-plus page anthology is compiled from the Chicago groups' sporadic journal *Arsenal*, as well as the *Surrealist Insurrection*

wall-poster series, *Surrealism: The Octopus-Typewriter*, collaborations such as *Free Spirits*, special issues of *Cultural Correspondence* and *Race Traitor*, as well as newer, unpublished material.

Unlike the recent *The Forecast is Hot*, which focused on Chicago's collective statements, centers mainly on individual statements. Divided into various sections and subsections whose titles themselves are inspiring, the book explores the concentrated interests of the Chicago



—Jan Hathaway

group and expands upon the first principles of Surrealism in an explosive and diverse assembly of voices.

Since Surrealism is more than an art or literary movement, but rather a way of acting and being in the world that makes use of a variety of expressive mediums, emphasis is made on a sweeping critique of the repressive social and psychic structures which hinder the realization of the Marvelous.

Work, capitalism, the state, white supremacy, patriarchy and sexual oppression, religion, ecocide, imperialist war, including the so-called 'war on terrorism,' and last but not least the rule of socially confined superego consciousness over everyday life, are condemned as upholders of exploitation and misery.

As the 1989 editorial "Now's the Time" states, "We are living, precariously enough, in a strange place called the United States, a nation founded on genocide, and whose government, the most murderous in history, is the deadliest enemy of human freedom in the world today ... we surrealists are more than ever communists, anarchists, atheists, irreconcilable revolutionaries, implacable enemies of things as they are, unrepentant seekers of a truly free society."

As surrealists recognize the social context that creates what we call reality, the book offers lucid and insightful criticism of Western Civilization. In "Freedom Now Sweet: Surrealism and the Black World" Robin D.G. Kelley writes, "Surrealism may have originated in the West, but it is rooted in a conspiracy against Western Civilization ... the surrealist practice of pure psychic automatism—which dates back to 1919—was much more than a modern technical invention, for it quickly led to the recognition that entire cultures had methods of thought and communication that transcended the conscious ... Related more to shamanism and trance states than to modernity as it was understood in the West, automatism is a struggle against the slavery of rationalism, a means to allow the imagination to run free."

Kelley mentions the anti-colonialist positions that helped politicize the original Surrealist Group in Paris and important African contributions to surrealism made by the groups around the journals *Legitime Defense* and *Tropiques* in the 30s and 40s, highlighting the importance of Thelonious Monk, Joseph Jarman, Jayne Cortez and Ted Joans, who move in the spaces where surrealism and African consciousness intersect.

Drawing from a variety of social theorists and writers such as Herbert Marcuse, C.L.R. James, St. Clair Drake, Wobbly humorist T-Bone Slim as well as marginalized figures (some of whom they've re-introduced into public discourse) and elements of Tribal, African and Western culture which exemplify vernacular surrealism, the book demonstrates how a latent desire for the revolution that surrealists and anarchists call for is a widespread component of consciousness, and a crucial factor in creating situations that can take us beyond the death-race that modern social life has become.

Suzanne Césaire wrote in a 1941 issue of *Tropiques* (cited by Kelley): "Far from contradicting, diluting, or diverting our revolutionary attitude toward life, surrealism strengthens it. It nourishes an impatient strength within us, endlessly reinforcing the massive army of refusals. And I am also thinking of tomorrow." Kelley complements this thought with his assertion that, "Surrealism recognizes that any revolution must begin with thought, with how we imagine a New World, with how we recon-

struct our social and individual relationships, with unleashing our desire and building a new future on the basis of love and creativity rather than rationality."

Among surrealism's popular accomplices, a favorite of the Chicago group has always been Blues and Jazz. Paul Garon's "Blues and the Poetry of Revolt" recognizes that blues champions "the primacy of the passions and thus must be considered in the service of human freedom."

Meanwhile, Franklin Rosemont's "Black Music and the Surrealist Revolution" constructs an analogy between surrealist automatism (originally inspired by the free association of psychoanalysis) and the improvisation of Free Jazz musicians like Cecil Taylor, who "are not mere allies but, objectively, active participants in the surrealist revolution."

Elsewhere in this collection, Phillip Lamantia reflects on old-time radio shows like *The Shadow*, Joseph Jablonski pays tribute to Lord Buckley, while David Roediger and Franklin Rosemont provide us with evidence of the surrealist relevance of Bugs Bunny.

Other noteworthy contents include explorations of youth culture, the Los Angeles rebellion of '92, protests against the WTO in Seattle, a critique of zoos, and much more.

*Surrealist Subversions* also includes material from more recent participants in the movement, among them Gale Ahrens, Anne Olson, Jen Besemer, and Jennifer Bean. The latter three, Chicago residents, are active in the renewal of counter-cultural oasis Bughouse Square, where Olson encountered the Surrealist Group.

New Yorker Cassandra Stark Mele provides a striking account of her personal struggle against parental and social oppression in "Your World, Not Mine." This essay shows the tragic consequences of adult repression of yearnings for the Marvelous in children, as well as how this trauma can be overcome. A child's response to life reveals deep truths about imposed social behavior, which can't be ignored.

Ronnie Burk looks at the murderous humanitarianism of "The U.S. AIDS Crisis in Africa", Nancy Joyce Peters writes of "The Heresy and History of Love," Daniel Boyer calls attention to the implications of "Mental Illness and the Belief in Whiteness," and Penelope Rosemont advocates "Breaking the Chains of Gender." There are also pieces about surrealist games such as *Exquisite Corpse* and *Time Traveler's Potlatch*, Lamantia's excellent "Poetic Matters," critiques of the traditional left, and numerous articles on "Liberating the Visual Imagination," "Defending the Marvelous," and "The Realization of Poetry in Everyday Life."

Regardless of reservations readers may have with particular points, this book should be read and discussed widely by today's revolutionary milieu. The international surrealist movement continues to mobilize energies for anarchists and all oppressed peoples to overcome capitalist-hierarchical civilization, along with nuclear-armed, oil-hungry, murdering elites and their immobilizing cultural distractions.

As Franklin Rosemont writes in his foreword, this book is aimed at "the young rebels of all ages who, since Seattle '99, have been creating vital outposts of resistance, revolt and revolution worldwide." May *Surrealist Subversions* resonate with, and amplify, our most radical longings.

Create vital outposts  
of resistance  
revolt and revolution

# Instead of a Primer:

## on isms, schisms, & anarchisms by Pono Bonobo

What is anarchism? This question continues to crop up as anarchists debate amongst themselves as how to accurately express their perspectives to non-anarchist activists in the anti-war and global justice movements.

Subsequently, a new wave of anarchist primers has appeared in the Summer editions of North American anti-authoritarian periodicals such as *Green Anarchy* and *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed*. Also, anarchist web sites often include glossaries, FAQs, mission statements, constitutions, manifestos, and talking points to explain anarchist principles to the uninitiated. Thus, we are challenged to recognize and celebrate anarchist diversity while seeking the meaningful collaborations needed to influence lasting change on the other.

In documents and articles that strive to define an anarchist philosophy and practice, there is much with which to agree, while other points pose philosophical, ideological, and tactical problems. A temptation exists to assign ourselves to self-contained camps, guarded by binary either-or absolutes that ring like King George W: "You're either with us or with the authoritarians."

These discussions and their expressions—in collectives and in the streets—are often contradictory, tentative, complex, mixed, muddy. As much as we aspire to act on our principles, fully living the critique in this society is next to impossible. It's much easier to invoke the Situationist notion of "demanding the impossible" than to create successful insurrections or live out one's vision of cooperative world.

At a regional anarchist gathering in Madison, Wisconsin in the mid-1990s, I took note of (but skipped) a workshop entitled "Lifestylism or Class War: Which Way for the Anarchist

Movement"? Then, like many others, I read with distaste Murray Bookchin's 1996 tirade *Social Anarchism vs. Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm* and the various responses to it. While the tension between an orthodox leftist anarchism and an eclectic visionary anarchism provided an amusing pre-occupation in the pre-Seattle, pre-9/11 politics of the mid-1990s, I expected the argument to wither away as we committed ourselves to more pressing and pertinent concerns.



photo/Chris Ranler

**Are these tattooed, voluntarily-homeless, traveler-, shoplifter prophets who pen the poetry of train hopping, dumpster diving, scandalous sex, and other hedonistic and hopeful trajectories merely spoiled rich kids for whom revolutionary activism is nothing more than trifling amusement?**

Sadly, the lifestyle anarchism vs. real anarchism arguments have not dried up. There's been a recent rejuvenation of righteous, judgmental jibes against white, middle class, hip, cultural activism within anarchism. As cookie-cutter condemnation goes, these voluntarily homeless, traveler, shoplifter prophets who pen the poetics of train hopping, dumpster diving, scandalous sex, and other hedonistic and hopeful trajectories are merely spoiled rich kids for whom revolutionary activism is nothing more than trifling amusement, a punk rock version of spring break at Daytona Beach, or the anarchist alternative to "going on tour" to see Grateful Dead rip-off bands.

### Cultural magicians in the miseraballist junkyard

What is occurring today with Crimethinkers and communards, eco-warriors and free-food scavengers, ravers and graffiti artists, squatters and train-hoppers reflects the notion of *class suicide* made popular in the 1960s by the Black Power movement. This concept, fashioned by middle-class African-Americans, suggested that young revolutionaries of middle-class descent could be genuine class-traitors and form bonds of solidarity (not trendy slumming or pseudo-moralistic charity) with the poor. Many who got political in the late 80s and early

90s began with a wholesale rejection of "middle-class values" concerning family, hierarchy, patriarchy, monogamy, work ethics and with an

embrace of the "cultural revolution" represented by punk rock, plagiarism, queer nations, sex-positive feminism, the mail art/zine scene, and earth-centered spirituality. Recognizing the mistake some New Agers make by simply ripping off a shallow interpretation of Native American ideals, many contemporary cultural magicians have in fact invented their own rituals and rebellions indigenous to their context-specific rejection of the miserabilist, ethically vapid junkyard of North American late capitalism.

Since those designated as lifestyle anarchists would never embrace that tag, these debates all too often become one-way arguments, with the *true class warriors* engaging in a kind of more-anarchist-than-thou judgmental, fundamentalism. To those anarchist writers who think they have it all figured out, I say this: "If your revolutionary strategy is so perfect and coherent, why do we still live in a world subdued by militarism, industrialism, and authoritarianism? Because the rest of us independent thinkers refuse to follow your foolproof plan?" I'm sure the police agents required to read our polemics are quite pleased to see us fighting amongst ourselves. My favorite is the formula rant that, within the finely nuanced, ideological confine of the writer, delineates "real" anarchists, lifestyle anarchists, armchair anarchists, and so on. This reminds me of the fundamentalist Protestants who do not believe Catholics to be "true" Christians or the Trotskyist organizations that ridicule other Trotskyist organizations for not being "true" Trotskyists.

Doesn't an anarchism that is less restrictive and draws upon diverse, visionary, poetic examples of historical and contemporary fighters for anarchism, make more sense than petty squabbles about who is or isn't a real anarchist? When I think of visionary anarchism (as opposed to tactical or ideological anarchism), I think of people like Emma Goldman, Charles Fourier, Leo Tolstoy, Henry Thoreau, Walt Whitman, Julian Beck, Judith Malina, Kenneth Rexroth, Herbert Marcuse, Norman Brown, Allen Ginsberg, Diane Di Prima, Marco Vassi, Raoul Vaneigem, Theodore Roszak, Ed Abbey, Ursula LeGuin, Wendell Berry, Gary Snyder, Andre Gorz, Hakim Bey, Penelope Rosemont, Utah Phillips, Carol Queen, Starhawk, and groups like the San Francisco Diggers, Wobblies, Catholic Workers, Chicago Surrealists, Postsituationists For Ourselves, CrimethInc, Earth First!, Food Not Bombs, Art and Revolution, Critical Mass, and Reclaim the Streets.

Of course, some people on this list might be characterized by others as "lifestylist." I doubt if a single one of these people or projects would self-define as simply "cultural" or "hip," but all of them, for me, share a spark of dynamic creativity unavail-

**We know that the left wing of corporate culture absorbed the beauty and spontaneity of the 1960s counter-culture to create the post-modern marketplace that finally brought us such wonders as MTV and Microsoft. But this does not mean that the visionary seed of cultural rebellion should never be planted again in more fertile anti-capitalist soil.**

able in the stunningly stern pragmatism of much militant anarcho-organizationalism. However, this joyful fire

often gets doused by the ocean of anti-organic ideologies. We need not look beyond the dominant society to find constitutional bureaucracies that preach our political salvation through seriousness and self-sacrifice. From fellow travelers on the path to transform the world, I expect ecstatic aspirations and an appetite for adventure, not just the magic pill of mechanical ideologies.

Any of us remotely familiar with the history of rebellion in the last 50 years or the writings of Baffler editor and frequent Nation contributor Tom Frank knows that the "culturally hip" version of activism without grounding in political analysis and direct action is ripe to be co-opted by the corporate culture and sold back to us in ads for off-road vehicles that read like ELF communiqués. (In particular, see Frank's book *The Conquest of Cool*) We know that "the personal as political" as a revolutionary imperative can quickly devolve into the "personal as profitable" as a reactionary inclination. We know that the left wing of corporate culture absorbed the beauty and spontaneity of the 1960s counter-culture to create the postmodern marketplace that finally brought us such wonders as MTV and Microsoft. But this does not mean that the visionary seed of cultural rebellion should never be planted again in more fertile anti-capitalist soil.

For brief moments in the 1970s, the debilitated logic that forever relegated the urban politico and rural hippie into irreconcilable camps imploded. Serious thinkers published rants defending the more political side of hip culture. In "Youth Culture: An Anarcho-Communist View" (1970), the aforementioned Murray Bookchin, today a staunch anti-lifestylist, criticized the orthodox Marxist line on the hip, and actually wrote, "In its demands for tribalism, free sexuality, community, mutual aid, ecstatic experience, and a balanced ecology, the Youth Culture prefigures, however inchoately, a joyous communist and classless society, freed of the trammels of hierarchy and domination, a society that would transcend the historic splits between town and country, individual and society, mind and body. Drawing from early rock-and-roll music, from the beat movement, the civil rights struggles, the peace movement, and even from the naturalism of neo-Taoist and neo-Buddhist cults (however unsavory this may be to the 'Left'), the Youth Culture has pieced together a life-style that is aimed at the internal system of domination that hierarchical society so viciously uses to bring the individual into partnership with his/her own enslavement."

Many people at the time understood that no single path—neither that of the frivolous hippies nor the orthodox

revolutionists—could totally transform culture. For a brief period, people chose to be both culturally hip and politically defiant by taking pages from the Situationists and the Yippies, and writing a different script that questioned every aspect of daily life to finally realize, as people like Vaneigem do so eloquently, the intrinsic intimacy between pleasure and revolt.

Clearly, the contemporary, nostalgia-driven marketplace has kept the image of rebellion alive without any of its radical content. Yet to imagine a “60s revolution”—no matter how politically righteous, without Phil Ochs, free food, MC5, long hair, LSD, drag queens fighting cops at Stonewall, vegetarianism, creative pranks, and so on—is hardly to imagine at all.

Likewise, for me to imagine the resurgence of anarchist politics since the late 1980s without its cultural component—found in Chumbawamba, infoshops, Crass, pirate radio, squats and bolos, riot grrrls, the Layabouts, MDC, mudpeople, radical faeries, Casey Neill, tree-sits and forest encampments, guerilla dance parties, polyamory, temporary autonomous zones, permaculture and so much more, would suck all the joy out of the last two decades of dissent. Today, hip may be more about hip-hop than hippie or more about going out to the Rave than back to the land, but it still offers—in its least commodified forms—a glimpse of the new society gloriously giving birth to itself amid the toxic rubble of the old.

In response to all the primers and programs permeating our milieu, here are a few talking points of my own. I hope the reader will not mistake my confidence in these suggestions for a strict ideology; all of these are intended as invitations for more debate and discussion:

### On (middle) Class War(r)iors

Throughout the last few hundred years, many notable and noble radicals have come from the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie, and the middle class as well as from the working class. When people reject privilege and take up common cause with insurrectionary movements, this should inspire solidarity not suspicion. The moralistic and guilt-ridden, “I’m-more-oppressed-than-you” arguments in radical publications come off as blindly biased.

I cringe when I read articles like Joe Levasseur’s “Middle Class Dominance and the Negation of Class Struggle” (see *Clamor*, March/April 2002). Levasseur charges that the anarchist movement is hurt by “an abundance of middle class ideas and thought patterns which completely undermine real class struggle.” However, he’s a bit fuzzy to provide thoughtful, concrete examples of these “middle class ideas” other than through making reactionary assumptions about pacifists and members of the Crimethinc Workers Collective.

He is convinced that these “middle class dominators” include people guilty of such treacherous sins as writing “New Age,” visionary, poetic parables about the potential of dreaming the new world into being. Now, CrimethInc’s neo-Situationist, Hakim Bey-inspired manifestos may not be your cup of tea, but they hardly seem guilty of dominating anyone with their quasi-religious defense of the outlaw life. Levasseur is equally weak in terms of defining *real class struggle*; his example of authentic action is window-breaking in Seattle. Lots of anarchists have defended spontaneous (or planned) vandalism as tactic without elevating it to the status of real class struggle.

Levasseur is clear about who should dominate the anarchist movement instead of the middle class: the “lowered and oppressed classes in society” get his vote. He further elucidates that he refers here to “everyone within a lower income bracket

who did not choose to be in their current situation.” (Should I start by bringing a copy of my latest tax return to the big demo, so the *real working class comrades* can check my credentials?) Even though the majority of

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**Clearly, having a study group of the NEFAC constitution in the streets of Calgary would have done more to foment revolutionary change than a bunch of hippies going wild!**

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Americans were either born middle class, currently consider themselves middle class, or want to work 60 hours each week to become middle class, Levasseur provides no remedy for those of this class who support a revolution to overturn capitalism, war, environmental destruction, and the state.

### Our nakedness is our weapon . . .

From Berkeley’s topless march where women demand the right to go bare-breasted under the summer sun to San Francisco’s mudpeople parade to countless clothing optional collectives across the continent, nudity as political statement has a varied and voluptuous history. However, this past June, when activists boldly strutted their bare asses in front of a GAP store in Calgary to protest the sale of clothes made in sweatshops, this was seen as a mere spectacle, characterized as “the poverty of protest porn.”

In his “The Anti-G8 Protests in Calgary: Some Contributions to a Critique of the Anti-Globalization Movement” (which has been circulated widely on anarchist websites) Northeastern Federation of Anarcho-Communists (NEFAC) spokesperson Tom Keefer moralistically derided the tactics of creative confrontation at global justice convergences and suggested as an alternative something that sounded like re-education training for those of us who still think the revolution should be fun.

Protesters might consider taking a hefty dose of “revolutionary discipline” from the comrades in NEFAC so their tactics don’t turn into “an irrelevant fashion statement or an apolitical and unplanned clash with the forces of authority.” Clearly, having a study group of the NEFAC constitution in the streets of Calgary would have done more to foment revolutionary change

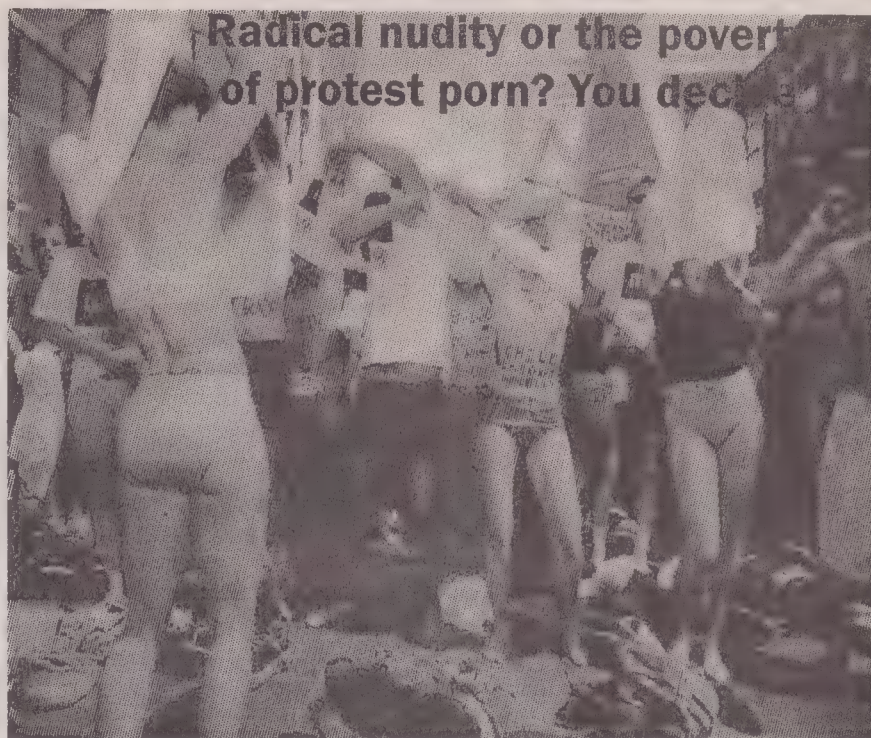
than a bunch of hippies going wild!

In his position-paper, Keefer charges, "[A]nti-capitalism' became a strategy of producing 'shocking' and symbolic spectacles—'protest-porn'—which had the effect of neither shutting down the corporate center of Calgary, nor of reaching out to un-politicized workers and linking up to their struggles or concerns. Some of these actions included a 'die-in' in a park, getting naked in front of the Gap, having a group of people take off their clothes and cover themselves in mud and grunt as they cavorted through the streets, and the playing of two 5 minute games of 'anarchist' soccer on a downtown intersection following the snake march protest. 'Actions' like this serve only to draw a line between the radical 'anti-capitalists' and ordinary working people who while exploited by capitalism, can see pretty clearly that a movement made up of naked, grunting, mud covered middle class 'earth people' has little to concretely offer them in overcoming the oppressive conditions of their lives."

Perhaps Keefer has a point, but it seems to me that ordinary working people quite enjoy spectacles and rarely allow a politically correct ideology to deter their enjoyment of everything from sporting events to rock concerts. Clearly, anarchists did not create the spectacle-and-sound-byte culture in which we live, and the dominant spectacle breeds passive, disempowered consumers.

Nonetheless, our counter-spectacles can at times be quite powerful at diverting the gaze of ordinary people from the talking heads to our living resistance. Should we be so firmly scolded for using highly visual tactics to communicate our visions, especially when these tactics can provide a galvanizing and inspiring spirit for our movement? Sure, it would be great to have had nudity *and* to have shut down Calgary or the meetings in Kananaskis, but the prevalence of so-called protest porn cannot be blamed for the convergence's lack of effectiveness in stopping the G8 summit.

I wonder if Keefer and those who share his perspective would have taken their anti-nudity arguments to Africa a few weeks later when hundreds of half-naked women in Nigeria challenged the oil giant ChevronTexaco. Unarmed female protest-



photo/Andrew Stern

Radical nudity or the poverty  
of protest porn? You decide

ers boldly claimed "Our nakedness is our weapon" to confront the contrast between the oil company's extreme wealth and the workers' extreme poverty.

According to news reports, "Public nudity by adult women, widely considered a taboo in Nigeria, is viewed as a way of shaming others into action." The protest encampments that lasted as long as ten days successfully put a dent in Chevron's ability to make production

quotas and the company finally caved in to meet demonstrators' demands for justice around issues such as jobs, school, and drinkable water.

The North American, anarchist prudes fuel most of their condemnations of creative tactics on the notion that nudity and the like are middle-class fetishes that will alienate ordinary working people. This contention, based more on the prude's perception than on any measurable reality, has been used to marginalize queers, women, and other sex radicals in revolutionary movements for decades.

Even worse, some activists blindly tolerate blatant homophobia, sexism, and machismo because they believe these values have currency among the working class, and besides, we can deal with such effeminate, minor concerns "after the revolution." For any queer who has been bashed or for any woman who has been raped, harassed, or had a male radical make judgment of her reproductive choices, these are not minor issues.

Furthermore, groups like the naked women of Nigeria disprove the paternalistic thesis that "the oppressed people in the developing world" are not concerned with creative means of nonviolent revolt.

Granted, the context of the Nigerian protest is different than Calgary. Still, if a million people had showed up, we might not be having this discussion. I cannot imagine too many protesters sitting at home thinking, "Well, I really wanted to go smash up global capitalism this week, but I heard that a bunch of naked hippies would be there, so I decided to stay home." Throughout history, seemingly reckless and visionary acts have sparked



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lasting change and seemingly rigid critics have come along to judge those acts in retrospect.

### **You cannot use the master's tools . . .**

The late African-American, radical, lesbian poet Audre Lorde is well-known for her maxim "You cannot use the master's tools to destroy the master's house." Throughout the history of the modern anarchist movement, debates about the ethics and efficiency of strategies and tactics have dealt with the classic tensions between *means* and *ends*. For the most part, anarchists believe that their process within collectives and their acts for revolution should be consistent with their principles. This tension is particularly charged on the question of violence vs. non-violence.

Despite what one might read in *Anarchy*, *Green Anarchy*, or a dozen other anti-authoritarian magazines, there's a vast and varied pacifist tradition within anarchism. For some, anarchism and pacifism are in fact synonyms based on the idea that if government equals violence, no government means no violence. In most anarchist visions of a cooperative society, the new world would be free from the institutionalized violence of the state that has come so close to destroying the earth and its peoples.

While many argue about the ethics of armed self-defense and the need for more militant confrontations with the State as part of our struggle, most anarchists would agree that the organized killing of other humans is not part of the anarchist vision. At the core, any act of violence against another human has an authoritarian component; it is the definition of power over.

However, in a recent primer entitled, "Instead of a Meeting: by someone too irritated to sit through another one" (*Anarchy* #53, Summer 2002), Lawrence Jarach asserts, "Our tactics must be in keeping with our principles. But it is important to remember that tactics are not the same thing as principles. Non-violence is not an anarchist principle; it is a tactic. Depending on the situation, we decide when it's convenient-or-not-to adhere to non-violent guidelines. At times we may decide that it makes more sense to fight back with force. Morality plays no part in deciding upon which tactics to use in a given situation; it only matters what is compatible with our strategy and principles."

To say that nonviolence is a not an anti-authoritarian principle is indefensible. To understand the nature of the marriage between authority and violence historically is to see that *violence always has an authoritarian component*, and thus non-violence, especially mass resistance and noncooperation with

the state (not the passive-ism that is weak substitute for radical pacifism) should always have an inherently anarchist or anti-authoritarian quality.

However, the extensive "Anarchist FAQ" at Infoshop.org provides a much more balanced discussion of the tension between violence and nonviolence. At one point, the thoughtful piece explains: "Thus, the attraction of pacifism to anarchists is clear. Violence is authoritarian and coercive, and so its use does contradict anarchist principles. That is why anarchists would agree with Malatesta when he argues that '[w]e are on principle opposed to violence and for this reason wish that the social struggle should be conducted as humanely as possible.'

Most, if not all, anarchists who are not strict pacifists agree with pacifist-anarchists when they argue that violence can often be counterproductive, alienating people and giving the state an excuse to repress both the anarchist movement and popular movements for social change. All anarchists support non-violent direct action and civil disobedience, which often provide better roads to radical change."

Still, Ward Churchill's non-anarchist book *Pacifism as Pathology* has become a classic among street-fighting anarchists. Many anarchists completely buy Churchill's fallacious thesis that a commitment to nonviolent social struggle comes from middle-class roots, and even worse, that activists who advocate nonviolence as anything more than tactic are suffering from a form of social-mental illness. In the ritual pacifist-bashing that preoccupies the chain-rattling hyper-militancy of anarchist writers, it's quite common to recycle Churchill's flawed and over-simplified arguments without question.

It's important to defend nonviolence but avoid the moralizing, cop-loving bullshit that gave pacifists a really bad name in Seattle as some activists defended the sanctity of Starbucks' windows and even tried to violently prevent property destruction in the name of nonviolence. Before anarchists unequivocally accept the premises of Ward Churchill and others on this question, I encourage them to at least look at the explicitly anarchist defenses of philosophical and tactical nonviolence expressed in the works of people like Leo Tolstoy and Julian Beck.

Thankfully, in many actions, the "diversity of tactics" line has actually created gestures of remarkable solidarity between the militants and the pacifists. At the A16 actions in Washington DC in 2000, the anarchist black blocs made it a priority to defend the pacifists from being attacked by the cops.

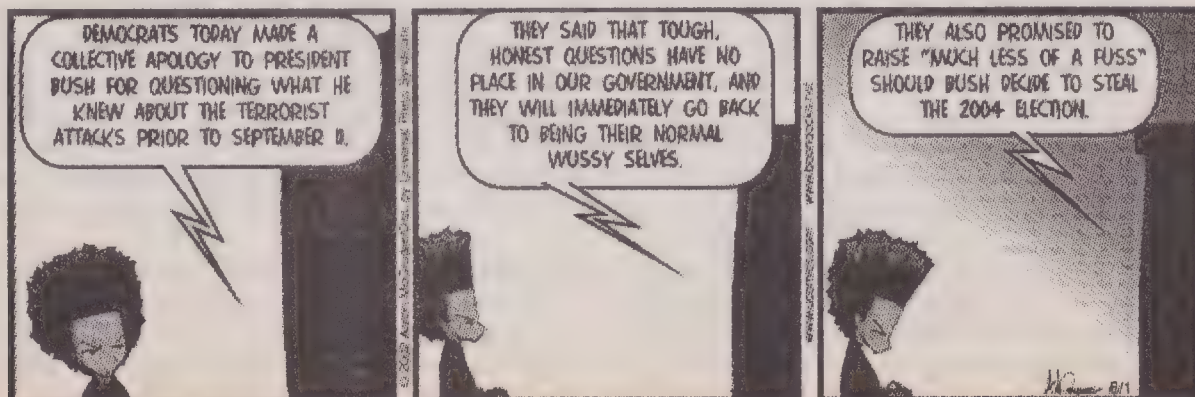
While I do not want the "final word" concerning the question of violence or nonviolence within anarchism, my sympathies clearly lie with the anarcho-pacifists. For starters, I'd like to see more within our milieu refrain from hastily branding all pacifists as "middle class moralists" and grapple with the logic behind the assertion that nonviolence is in fact an anarchist principle.

## We're not going to disappear

I am anarchist who believes a nonviolent revolution needs to sweep this continent. I will never apologize for resisting empire and advocating a society of voluntary cooperation freed from the greed and malice of the militaristic Enronistas and World-Communists.

People frequently challenge anarchists to explain exactly how to arrive at an anti-authoritarian world; it's as if to propose a new society requires us to detail every contingency and respond to every counterargument. As much as a solid game plan would help any world-changing adventure, most anti-authoritarian activists are not strategists and politicians with a foolproof battle plan. Anarchism's appeal is in its eclectic, elusive, and slippery nature: not a system but an attractive decoupage of desires; not a template but a tempting poetry of suggestions; not a unified Movement but the collective moves of autonomous collectives.

But then what to do? Embrace the unpredictable, the spontaneous, the humble-and realize that radical social change in the 21st Century is unlikely to follow a neatly-packaged trajectory. Our legacy is part of a deep and varied anti-tradition that thwarts the totality without totalizing truisms. That is, just as we consider the totality and refuse to get lost in reform of the component parts, our responses should be contextual and specific, not sweeping and programmatic.



*Like the stars, the night  
Like the sun, the day  
The dawn, the morning  
The flower, the petal  
The bee, the nectar  
The beehive, the honey  
The lover, the beloved;  
So one carries the Ideal  
In one's thoughts*

# Letter to a Friend

*by Federico Arcos*

You ask me if I can define anarchism. It's very difficult for me to do concretely. Personally, I don't consider myself good enough to call myself an anarchist because I have always believed that to be one it would be necessary to reach the extreme point of sacrifice and to devote oneself without reservation to doing good, without limit and without cease. I can say that I still find myself tied to those endless commodities that contemporary society has created, and even though I try to limit them as much as I can, it will never be enough. The Tolstoyan spirit that commends the freedom of the isolated individual, I will never be able to attain.

As you know, I grew up in the environment of a working class family with very limited means when libertarian ideas were spreading and increasing the hopes of being able to create a better world. So, at home I would read Solidaridad Obrera and Revista Blanca or Estudios, the libertarian press. When my father was dismissed from his job because of his advanced age, I would read the newspaper to him and to some of our neighbors who would gather at the door of our house to enjoy the fresh air as was the custom in those days. As much from what I read as from the conversations that frequently took place at home at supper on workdays or at Sunday dinners, the spirit of those days flowed into me. I felt, along with my family, the same disquiet, the sentiment, the selflessness the workers felt, those who gave of themselves completely in unions and educational programs, all at the cost of firings, persecution, imprisonment, torture, and even assassination. It was a unique environment that came to shape thousands of compa eros. Brotherhood and sacrifice characterized the men and women who wrote those beautiful pages full of exploits that today they want to erase from history, but that still remain alive in the hearts and minds of the few of us who learned how to understand those exploits and to relive them intensely.

After all this, I have not answered your desire to know what I think of anarchism. Anarchism should be the ultimate expression of freedom in all its meanings, a freedom that does not interfere with and that always respects the freedom of others. I could also say that for me anarchism is something more than the economic organization of society based on the free association of individuals which existed in many collectives and villages in Spain during the revolutionary period of 1936-39, especially in Aragon, the Levant and Catalonia, and in other anti-fascist regions of Spain. It should embody an implicit respect for life. It is a reaffirmation of the human being based on feelings and affection that make one perceive the yearnings, hopes, sorrows, and pains that present themselves in the course of our existence.

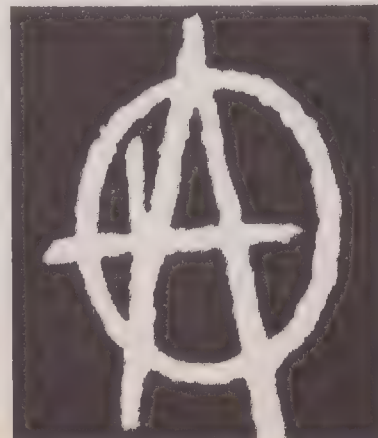
Perhaps I could say that I feel anarchism more in my heart than in my mind, the way hopeful lovers idealize their beloved. And, on this path, to love and to value all of humanity and nature for their own sake.

Again, it is difficult for me to define it, and I'm sorry to disappoint you if I'm not clear enough to satisfy your request.

*translated from the Spanish by Marilyn Rashid & David Watson*

*Federico Arcos, born in 1920, fought in the Spanish revolution and civil war and participated in clandestine activities in France and Spain against the Franco regime after the defeat of the Spanish republic. He has been a life-long participant in the libertarian movement, including being a collaborator on the Black & Red and Fifth Estate projects.*

*He wrote this to a young anarchist who had asked him his definition of anarchism.*



**first**

Volunteer to serve the Negation  
 Never too late for Mrs Ludd  
 If Bugs Bunny's a Surrealist  
 what's that make Elmer Fudd?  
 Wherever you are tonight Mrs L  
 Tiamat Tara river nymph undine  
 Captain Moonlight & Saint Monday  
 flaneurs on ancient boulevards of spleen  
 never complain never explain  
 our secret society goes back to the Neolithic  
 peonies penises skinsoft rain  
 the garden-the bicycle-please be more specific

**second**

Perfect Mirror of Global Capital  
 the Devil's waiting room  
 haunted slum & universal slime  
 of techGnosis & cybergloom  
 pumpkinification  
 carpal brain syndrome  
 public suicide machine  
 Mammon's Dictaphone  
 Moloch's internal combustion  
 psychic noise pollution  
 landscape of corpselight  
 metaphoric cold fusion

**third**

Very well no longer resist prophetic voices  
 angry illiterate letter pinned to social factory's door  
 Neither Physics Nor Metaphysics-empirical morality  
 haunted by spirits real as need be but poor.  
 Suburban Luddite. Jungle marches on the city  
 tear down digital enclosures smash the looms  
 turn off the hell drone kill the power  
 light the lying City only with Moon.

**Fourth**

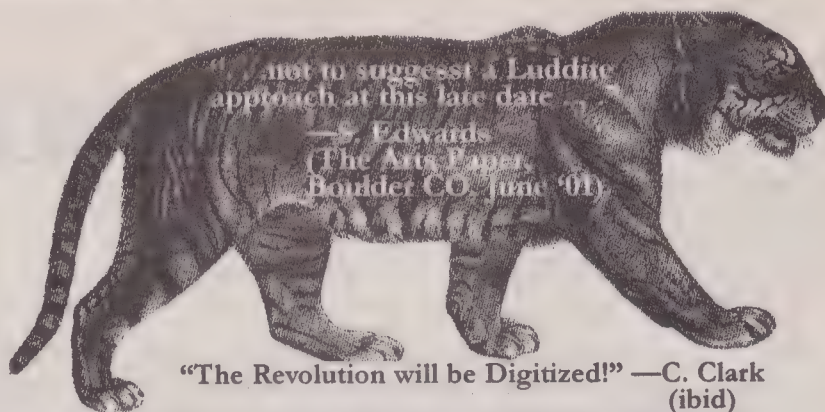
zerowork taoist hermitage  
 maybe in the Hardenbergh Mts  
 Catskill romantic arts-&-crafts style  
 with bunches of twisty branches  
 jugs of cider marked XX  
 cellphone towers not yet sprouted  
 once or twice per day satanic zzmm  
 of intercontinental jets otherwise silence  
 thunder wind & birds all silent  
 rain is a type of silence  
 dead drunk under the Moon  
 Luddite Pornography  
 sunlight or rainlight in the hayloft  
 privy overgrown with primrose & honeysuckle  
 up in the cold clouds & dripping pines  
 no car no phone no plumbing no electricity  
 nothing to block trembling blue orgone  
 or stupidity of naked Nature  
 now pubescent & swollen

**fifth & last**

Reactionary nostalgist  
 crackpot Kropotkinite  
 last human lab-rat gone rabid  
 ungrateful dynamite

monasteries of slowness  
 even light goes less than MC2  
 cultivate holy datalessness  
 secrets meant to be shared

How many Lady Ludds  
 how many General Neds  
 it was raining when you left us  
 we forgot what you said



**Letter: Mrs. Ludd**  
 poems by Peter Lamborn Wilson

**THE BLACK LAMP**

1.

radical journal connected to the Despard conspiracy &  
 Luddism early 1800s north of England

or: "dark lantern" or glim used by pre-electric burglars  
 could also refer to oil lamp with glass chimney  
 unwashed black with carbon or "lampblack" (once used  
 to make ink)

or metaphor: eyes of the beloved color  
 of maderia in tawny dark bottles down in  
 the cellar at night by glinting candlelight:  
 velvety monastery under perverse Moon

oxymoron: sun at midnight: night sky with  
 paradoxical meteors: negative illumination

2.

Rolling Blackout  
 Switch off the Aufklarung before leaving  
 socialism minus electricity please  
 Black Light of the alchemists of Isfahan  
 where even day falls into reveries  
 Power failure: rain comes in lacquered screens  
 the house feels like a pelican of glass  
 phone goes dead but someone else's voice  
 starts to life like pistils licked by bees  
 Storm's over:  
 power returns but not to you  
 tree-hating landscape-rapists throw the switch  
 electrocuting all your monastic pleasures  
 icebox grumbles lightbulbs galvanize  
 radio threatens more cancerous weather  
 eliminating all your buried treasures

3.

### Enoch's Hammer

We lose a world every 15 minutes  
by evening nostalgia for morning overtakes us  
digital hemlock numbs our limbs to slumber  
fearing nothing nice will come to wake us  
This IS the Future: how do you like it so far  
anachronistic fireflies? Petroleum: a prophecy  
(by the author of Der Golem) suffocation  
600 channels: tombstones: burning seas  
Black Lamp dark phosphorescence pearl of night  
how many dodo species whacked like weeds  
or children vanished into ambient screens  
No King But King Ludd asleep beneath the hill  
under the parking lot the beach-but who  
could be foolish enough to want to smash machines?

note

last known sledgehammer of the Luddites  
manufactured by Enoch & Co  
I see it under glass in the museum  
one night begin to glow

### ET IN ARCADIA (for Bishop Mark Sullivan)

"The human desire for transcendence is an  
arguably hard-wired behaviour"  
—Arcadia Research Project  
Australian Network for Art & Technology

1.

Gnostic police-mind over matter-  
what else is law but magic?  
a fictitious person has no liabilities-  
only assets  
no corpse to weigh down its  
immortal spirit

Sphinx

vast & vague as a cloud of radioactivity

succubus

flea that swells to the size of a galaxy  
"discorporation" might be a more accurate term  
or something retro like "Sathanas"

Cell phone towers hide inside steeples  
where does bad religion go when it dies?

El Estupido the unconscious thinks it's all SciFi  
strawberries crossed with the genes of fat people

2.

High Moral Ground? Y'can't get there from here  
pervert pleasure: class traitor (see Genet)  
voluptuous dégringolade-Imaginal Past  
down the hole with the trolls: gone away

Exiles of Cyberia Unite  
nothing to lose but chains of Lite.

3.

The old Ukrainian carp fishers  
are picking up & moving  
slowly out of this dutch genre  
June & dappled-even the name is dutch  
Wallkill.

From the other bank

you can see they scored at least  
one big one  
dull gold held up in the ray between  
blue clouds  
steamed with dill & potatoes

4.

renunciation laves the skin like rain  
silky spagyric excised from time but not  
from space BLAMM thunder defines space  
a game of bowls in a valley time forgot  
Not that you have anything against time  
as continuum rather than torture machine  
or the Taylorism of everyday life sliced  
& diced & lost to some Maxwellian fiend  
In fact the Order proposes a reconquista  
seizing back the provinces of rain  
invisible worlds hover behind its screens  
Every gadget that disappears makes way  
for unpolluted space/time to reclaim  
the marches between the banal & the unseen

5.

Anabaptists on dope: strict observance  
Amish icebox spermaceti lamps  
under the radar off the grid-in fact  
no phone no television & no amps  
Entheogenic sacramental heaven  
whiling away the time till Armageddon

6.

haven't tied off the veins of pleasure but  
just can't stand the tragedy of representation

dunno much theology biology but  
shade is as good as a hat

Le Physiognomie du gout delivers the goods but  
the Slow Food Movement's an Escargo Cult

the best parts could be buried in a box but  
their aura would heal sterile soil

don't want to flee the country again but  
might have to

7.

E T A Hoffmann Fan Club  
Pro-Endarkenment Left  
meet at the bend in the river  
between warp & weft

Children on summer lawns  
birds at their dawning jamming  
nightingales sullen thunder  
hunting & farming

Fishing the manuscriptorium  
the stylite in an armchair  
stuck in the crook of a willow  
prays to empty air

# How green is *Green* *Anarchy*?

by Ellen Carryout

Both the Spring & Summer 2002 editions of *Green Anarchy* were read and studied for this review. GA is available for \$2.00 contact POB 11331, Eugene, OR 97440



To join the *green* of ecology with the *black* of anarchy is to make transparent something intuitively apparent. To genuinely critique the state and authority is to critique civilization and industrial devastation. The first anarchists—the indigenous gatherers who lived in what Marshall Sahlins dubbed “the original leisure society”—were certainly green anarchists. The theses that create projects like *Green Anarchy* (GA) are important ones.

But as David Watson's 1997 article “Swamp Fever” shows, this common intuitive ground does not necessarily make allies of all who gravitate to the anarcho-primitivist or green anarchist tag. Watson explains, “Calling oneself a primitivist, or pretending that the origins of the authoritarian plague can be ultimately explained, helps little . . . . A movement which attempts to reduce primitive insights into an ideology or strategy risks becoming a caricature of its own best instincts.”

Unfortunately, the green anarchism espoused by the Eugene-based collective that publishes *Green Anarchy* has not only reduced primitive insights into a political program, it is a confused agenda fraught with problems. While I must say I have more in common with these green anarchists than with most liberal environmentalists, my disagreements with this 'zine are as strong as my sympathies.

Proud to align itself with eco-feminist and queer-anarchist perspectives, the GA collective nonetheless chose as its front page story for Spring Ted Kaczynski's “Hit Where It Hurts.” In this ugly essay, the ex-Unabomber calls sexism, racism, homophobia, sweatshops, and the like “non-essential” issues. He dubs those of us who support what he characterizes as victim-based liberation causes as nothing more than “pink reformers.” It's really disgusting that anarchists would provide prominence to the prose of such a thug. What's next? Front page raps by Eminem?

The fact that Ted is doing time in the slammer for killing people in his once secret war against the technological system has made him a folk hero among the green anarchist set. In the collective's disclaimer following “Hit Where It Hurts,” they question his racist and heterosexist tendencies but make clear that they admire him as a “sharp strategic thinker” and “wholeheartedly support” him as “an anarchist political prisoner.”

In the same Spring publication, the GA editors decided to print an excerpt of Ward Churchill's response to 9/11 called “‘Some People Push Back’: On the Justice of Roosting Chickens.” At first glance, this visceral and vindictive vendetta has a certain appeal. However, I distrust Ward Churchill when he ridicules American peace activists and ultimately defends the attacks against World Trade Center as a form of “reality therapy” and “medicinal” justice. Churchill's charges against the empire are hardly unfounded, but the tone of his ideological assaults leave me unsettled.

The summer version of *Green Anarchy* contains nothing as patently offensive as the aforementioned articles by Kaczynski or Churchill. In fact, I was very pleased to see “Sex Among the Zombies,” a reprint from Arthur Evans' amazing 1978 work *Witchcraft and the Gay Counterculture*. As Evans shows the connections between sexual repression and industrial domination, he also suggests that the earthy ecology we wish to defend includes an inherently erotic energy.

Despite the brightness brought by the excerpt from Evans' classic, the GA journal remains more preoccupied with trashing other anarchists who the editors believe are too philosophical, intellectual, fashionable, or “gradualist.” No, as for tactics, the GA collective explicitly prefers what they call “focused, thoughtful acts of revolutionary violence” to “principled arguments” or education.



That is, it appears that GA wants to do as other so-called revolutionaries have done in the past: impose their ideas on others through violence rather than win minds through persuasion and debate. Rather than embrace the contagious nature of desire or trust the intelligence of other humans, we should assume that the brainwashed masses need the GA vanguard to show us the way to the promised land. I would find such self-righteous arrogance deeply troubling even if its proponents didn't claim to back up such bad-ass, authoritarian rhetoric with rifles and bombs.

This summer, folks affiliated with GA took their ideas on tour with punk shows and film festivals to raise money for political prisoners. The tour's planners firmly stated before beginning that their "time is running out" for unrestricted "aboveground" activism and that they saw this tour as a sort of "last stand." At least one right-wing "eco-terrorism expert" agreed about the seriousness of GA's threat to civilization and asked the FBI to

investigate the tour. However, the FBI publicly declared its support of the rights of the GA tour to travel, perform, and express their ideas, "no matter what their message or their purpose." At least for the record, the FBI does not see the GA crew as posing much of a revolutionary threat with thrashy tunes and radical flicks. Are the GA people guilty of paranoid self-importance? Or are they not paranoid enough?

The editors of *Green Anarchy* do not hesitate to express their affinity with all that's wild, but despite their best intentions, too much of this publication has been domesticated by ideology and self-righteousness. The way of the wolf is not the way of the hunter. To embrace the gauntlet of a doomsday battle is to become the machine we oppose. To follow the gun on this journal's cover is to propose as necessary a very predictable, impractical, and suicidal solution.

## Cheerleaders of the Revolution

Radical cheerleaders give a playful, yet militant, feminist flavor to anti-authoritarian protest. After reading through the third edition of the *Radical Cheerleader Handbook*, I want to grab a pair of pom-poms and take to the streets.

The inspiring cheers and rants throughout this radical handbook prepare wimmin for the front lines and can transform a sober action into a party. Cheers for every occasion from a "Take back the night" rally to the anti-WTO/IMF/WorldBank protests are represented in full voice.

Drawings of spectacular, hairy wimmin illustrate the text while words about beauty myths and gender roles spread across the pages.

If you are in need of radical cheers, grab a copy of the *Radical Cheerleading Handbook* now! For more information, write to PO Box 961 Lake Worth, Florida, 33460. Handbooks are \$2. Posters of select cheers are also available. —Amanda

## Beneath the Pavement

*Beneath the Paving Stones — Situationists and the Beach, May 1968*  
Texts edited by Dark Star (2001)

This anthology brings together the three most widely translated, distributed and influential pamphlets of the Situationist International available in the sixties, along with an eyewitness account of the

Pretty womyn with your  
style and grace  
shouting anarchy  
all over the place.  
Rad-ass womyn who don't take shit  
High-kicking it to, lick my clit.  
Hairy legs and arm pits too,  
refusing to shave  
and smelling natural, woo-hoo!  
From blocks away I hear your cheers,  
from the crowds you get sneered.  
I grab my pom-poms do a split,  
then shout loud,  
rapist, "shoot them in the dick."  
Roller-skating through the streets,  
Watch out cause we're coming in fleets.  
Hoola-hoopin' along the way,  
we are the cheerleaders  
of the revolution and here to stay...  
So beautiful womyn all over the place,  
join in with all your style and grace,  
we're gonna shout it loud and clear,  
**ANARCHY-  
RIGHT NOW, RIGHT HERE!**  
Cheer by Coleen J.

May Events originally published in June 1968.

In addition, the book includes numerous documents, photographs, poster art and graffiti originating from Paris in 1968; it offers the reader not only a concise introduction to the ideas of the Situationists but also an insight into what Situationist material was readily available in the late sixties.

Included in the well put together anthology are the infamous "On the Poverty of

Student Life" by the SI and Students of Strasbourg, "Totality for Kids" by Raoul Vaneigem, and "The Decline and Fall of the 'Spectacular' Commodity-Economy" by Guy Debord. The book also contains a brief forward which puts the reprinted texts in historical context and an excellent "further reading" list.

For folks investigating the Situationists for the first time or for long time SI adherents and aficionados this book is a must have. It is well laid out, comprehensive and contains some great photos and cartoons.

My only complaint (and this is mostly due to my personal failings in pursuing knowledge in other languages) is that the cartoons, graphics and slogans are untranslated, leaving single language Yanks like me wanting for the witty, sarcastic and brilliant slogans that the SI and the whole Paris '68 Revolt were known for.

All in all, a great book that should be widely read considering the relevance of the Situationist critique to today's ongoing society of the spectacle.

—John Johnson

**be realistic  
DEMAND THE  
IMPOSSIBLE**

# The Punk Rock Candy Mountain

**Evasion.** CrimethInc ExWorkers Collective. Available from our distro for \$5 plus p&h. Please see page 55 for details.

**DIY GUIDE II.** CrimethInc ExWorkers Collective. Available from our distro: free with any book order.

**Hunter/Gatherer. Journal of Folklore & Folkwar.** CrimethInc ExWorkers Collective. Available from us: free with any book order.

**Editorial note:** In the last issue, I began to express my solidarity with the far-flung posse of revolutionary neo-Situ, post-punk poets known as CrimethInc. Now, I'd like to re-state that the **CrimethInc (ex)Workers Collective** is one of the best and brightest things to happen to N. American anarchism since TAZ hit the streets in 1991.

Like Hakim Bey's fabled epistle, CrimethInc documents are hugely popular among non-activists, non-anarchists, and people who have never been members of ARA, NEFAC, or the ELF. Because of the texts' popularity, poetic language, and anti-political energy, the Crimethinkers (and Hakim Bey) have been the targets of a huge backlash within Official Anarchism.

While I think no one person or group is beyond criticism, the attacks on CrimethInc have, for the most part, been mean-spirited exercises in name-calling and whining. If any one of the more-anti-bohemian-than-thou, puritanical, leftist rants against CrimethInc had worthy critiques, I'd try to acknowledge them.

But, really, I see them as sour and steeped in extra-serious notions of self-sacrifice. Perhaps the worst of these is the recent piece by Ahsen Ruins called "Against the Corpse Machine" (which has been widely circulated online). Its attack on CrimethInc is one of the harshest yet. To paraphrase Vaneigem, Ahsen Ruins so ignores joy's necessity in the project of revolution that he speaks with a



FE collective member  
contemplates life after work

**The nameless author could best be described as the Thoreau of the alley—one who lives/writes deliberately, and without regrets.**

corpsemachine in his mouth.

All the super-militant, super-moralistic shit that is making its rounds on the Internet in the guise of anarchism would make me want to puke without all the unwarranted, spoil-sport attacks on CrimethInc, a group of anonymous propagandists who deserve their popularity among punk rockers and academics.

Who knows, some of those traveler kids and school teachers reading *Evasion* and *Nights of Love, Days of War* just might be a little more down for the revolution than the vanguardist jerks who claim to be The Anarchists online. So, in my spirit of support for Crimethinkers everywhere, I'm reprinting this review of the controversial book *Evasion* (available from FE Books). This comes from the "Bad Subjects" collective and their online zine

devoted to "Political Education for Everyday Life."

—Sunfrog

## Evasion

review by Zack Furness (Dec. 2001)

"Something happened when we quit our jobs, quit paying rent, quit paying for anything. And I think back to the early days—when, like clouds parting to reveal the sun, we discovered what we were told had been lies, that it could be done, and that it would mean the time of our lives."

This quotation, taken from the introduction, provides a sneak preview into the world of *Evasion*—a world of overflowing dumpsters, political critiques, theft, excitement, and freedom.

*Evasion* is a collection of zines (of the same name) that have been compiled for the first time by the good folks at the CrimethInc. collective. While the book focuses upon the life of the author, it more acutely discusses the politics of living and the ability for people everywhere to drastically change the ways in which they live.

The book serves as both a blueprint for how to live outside the market (providing excellent advice about dumpster diving, squatting, stealing from corporate chains, freight hopping, etc.) and also as an invitation to those trapped within the tumultuous cycles of work and consumption.

However, the real essence of this book lies within the energetic and meaningful prose of the nameless author. While the entire book is well written, there are moments of pure genius that arise without warning, sweeping the reader into a different reality and a whirlwind of possibility.

During these moments, the nameless author could best be described as the Thoreau of the alley—one who lives/writes deliberately, and without regrets.

It is very fitting that the author remains nameless because the idea being explored

is that this could be you, your life, your freedom. Evasion suggests that true living can be done both for oneself, and in spite of capitalism.

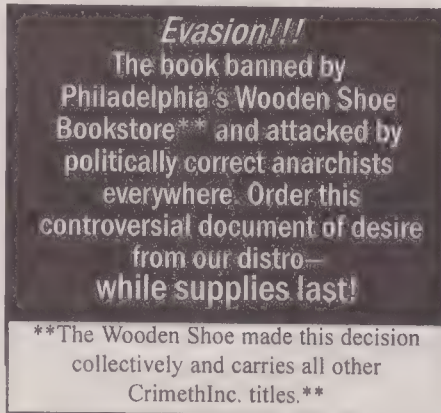
Specifically, *Evasion* teaches one how to live off the excesses of the capitalist system without contributing to it. The ethic presented to the reader is one of exploiting the exploiters—robbing the corporate chain-stores in order to get by, eating what others carelessly throw away, living in houses that people abandon, riding for free on trains that penetrate our landscape.

Despite the daily schemes of theft, food acquisition, travel, and housing, the author is explicit about his/her devotion to a lifestyle free from animal products, drugs, or alcohol.

Individuals that live a straight-edge, vegan lifestyle sometimes have the tendency to assume a “holier than thou” platform on which they tend to be overly critical. However, the author’s lifestyle choices are reflected upon in order to demonstrate to readers that one can live this lifestyle without compromising one’s ethics.

Furthermore, the author never expresses contempt for individuals who subscribe

to the capitalist system, but instead, he/she fully understands the symbiotic relationship at work. The author is not critical of people because they are blind sheep or mindless sinners, but because they have not challenged their worldview



and they are not living lives of enjoyment.

While the author’s lifestyle may not be appealing to everyone, it’s worth exploring how one can accomplish it. Regardless of your disposition, the message presented throughout is one that all of us can understand: life can be exciting, positive, fun, daring, and rewarding....but only if we let it be.

*Evasion* not only challenges the assumptions of what it means to survive, but

also, of what it means to truly live. It is not often that a book can really change the way in which you think about life. This is one of those books.

## Hunter/Gatherer

Another thought-provoking and graphically stunning ‘zine by the people who brought us *Harbinger*.

The central document here is the visionary statement of our ancient legacy called “History as We Live It.”

Perhaps responding to their growing chorus of critics, CrimethInc grounds this publication with many stories of practical self-liberation. Finally, they end with the “penultimatum” for every reader to publish the second edition of *Hunter/Gatherer*, leading to “35,000 versions” of the next issue. —Sunfrog

## DIY Guide

The Greensboro NC faction of the decentralized conspiracy known as CrimethInc have brought us a practical booklet about eating, creating, traveling, publishing, building, protesting, dismantling the system. More down-to-earth than the usual, dreamy CrimethInc. fare, this text practices what other Crimethinkers preach. —Sunfrog

*Sister of the Road* (aka Boxcar Bertha). As told to Ben Reitman. AK Press 2002. (Originally published in 1937). Available from our distro for \$15. Please see page 55 for details.

**“There are three types of the genus vagrant: the hobo, the tramp, and the bum. The hobo works and wanders; the tramp dreams and wanders; and the bum drinks and wanders.” —Ben Reitman**

Boxcar Bertha’s dramatic life overflows with love, enthusiasm, and uncompromising freedom. This story follows her glorious but gritty trajectory from growing up as a traveler and a communard among hobos, anarchists, free-love advocates, and radical agitators to her transient adventures among criminals, prostitutes, and seditious revolutionists.

Postmodern America presents many assumptions to delude us about the roots of the American counterculture. People too easily assume that everything “hip” began with the Beats, the hippies, the punks, *On the Road*, *Naked Lunch*, the “Summer of Love.” However, Bertha’s story reminds us of a vast, genuinely radical, class-conscious lineage for activists, saboteurs, drifters, crusties, hitch-hikers, trainhoppers.

Boxcar Bertha, a womanist nomad of the 1930s has much to teach about rebellion. Bertha’s vivid recollections about her childhood provide an inspiring prototype for today’s new wave of hip/punk parents. She describes free-schooling in a giant cooperative colony, her mother’s sexual autonomy, and a generalized uncompromising spirit untainted by morality or self-sacrifice.

For any reader dulled by the domestic demands of life in the prison of poverty or conformity, Bertha’s tales remind us that freedom is still available for those bold enough to seek it.

# letters to the editors

**We encourage your participation in this project with your comments on the publication & its perspectives. While we will read every letter, we will usually print the most enticing & engaging. E-mail letters or letters sent on disk are appreciated.**

## Dear FE Detroit Collective:

I got the issue stating that you all are passing on the paper! Just wanted to thank you for your many, many years of this project. I can't believe I've been reading the paper since 1976.

Over the years, it has given me lots of to think about and challenge me. I'm not in the same place I was in '76 (literally and philosophically), but I'm still glad to read the each issue.

The Tennessee collective has big shoes to fill! I hope some of you continue to write for the "new" FE. Good luck in your future endeavors.

Patti Winchester Springs, Mass.

**Walker Lane responds:** Thanks for being such a consistent reader and supporter all these years. Don't worry, the old folks in Detroit aren't being led out to pasture. We will continue to write, edit and do layout, however, most of the critical decisions and much of the work on each issue will be done by our friends in Tennessee. Also, I think they've shown with the last issue and this one, that they've already filled the big shoes.

## Dear FE Collective:

I read with interest the poem about monkeys printed in the latest issue of FIFTH ESTATE ("Monkey Shines," by Guy Lockwood). The writing paints an idealistic picture of monkeys in the wild, as in the lines,

"He doesn't work for any boss,  
Out in his forest, wild.  
But shares his gain, likewise his loss  
With kindred undefiled."

Nice idea, but what I've seen during recent visits to several forests with monkeys in West Africa, is that the larger

and more powerful males often intimidate the weaker of the species, and when coming across food, grab as much as they can carry and quickly run off with it, away from their "kindred undefiled." Sound like familiar behavior?

qani belul, Accra, Ghana

## Dear FE Collective:

It is great to see that the Fifth Estate is continuing. I look forward to the next issue. Also, thank you for John Clark's

**Write us! at PO Box 6, Liberty, TN 37095,  
or 4632 Second Avenue, Detroit, MI 48201,  
or email [FifthEstate@pumpkinhollow.net](mailto:FifthEstate@pumpkinhollow.net)**

review of the first issue of The Utopian in your Spring issue.

His review was positive overall, while engaging himself with the various authors. Since then a second issue has come out, including further analysis of Marxism, anarchism and African-American liberation, and a discussion of Ralph Ellison's Juneteenth. We have begun to work on the next issue. Our material can be accessed at our website, [www.utopianmag.com](http://www.utopianmag.com).

Wayne Price

## Portland Surrealists

(continued from page 34)

In December, we realized the Surradio project, thanks to KBOO's Circle "A" Radio host Honey Mud, a forest defender and friend of the group. The hour-long show was envisioned as a counterpoint to a previous radio broadcast on Dada and Surrealism, which had notable weaknesses and omissions.

Recorded poems, word-games, music, essays and discussion were provided by members of our group along with Dale Houstman of Blue Feathers from

Minneapolis, John Adams from Texas, Parry Harnden from Canada and Gypsy Sherrerd, editor of Paramithsa, from the UK.

Our next statement was inspired by a creative protest against the Coffee Creek Correctional Facility, built in Larry Eaton's neighborhood south of Portland. "Against Prisons: An Open Letter To Larry Eaton" applauded Eaton's "planting" of five or more school buses "like monstrous straws of steel wheat" in his and neighbors' yards.

But while Eaton's main concern was property values and aesthetics, we denounced the social conditions which created and sustain the prison industry, and proposed "a widespread revolt against the controlling institutions, followed by the founding of a new culture based on freedom, love and imagination."

Eaton didn't respond to our mailing, but has continued to bury buses. Our first public intervention was an appearance at First Thursday, a monthly capitalist/elitist art gallery event.

Three surrealists and four friends used costumes, face paint, sidewalk chalking, duck calls and ranting to make our point. A text was circulated which announced our lack of confidence in the conformist ambience and asked,

"What explorations of the imagination found within these galleries cannot be amplified a thousand fold by an inspired uprising in the streets? In solidarity with the street performers and sidewalk outsiders we protest the city's permit requirement and long for an unauthorized creative atmosphere with an empowered, revolutionary essence. We dream of endlessly fluxing interactive galleries and transient celebrations evolving from intoxicating play, impulsively overwhelming streets and cities. We long for the creation of voodoo vandalism and childlike chalk art, and slow dancing in burning churches and bubble baths!"

Although the yuppies and art consumers were scared away, many others were friendly, helping pass out the text "Ze Rouge" (inspired by the highly flammable Vodun spirits related to Haitian

revolts) and dancing and talking with us.

This action was accompanied by a humorous example of objective chance in that a large fire somewhere in the distance began pouring smoke over the area. Two friends, loose on wine taken from the galleries, found and wore some discarded plastic fire hats.

Although still inexperienced as a group, we're excited to be carrying on the surrealist project in the Pacific Northwest and

hope to build a larger community of cross-fertilization between surrealists, anarchists and radicals, and rogue creative networks of all sorts.

Tentative areas for future activity include surrealist events/parties, a black humor festival, dream collection, collaboration with the free school, creative vandalism, discussions of various movements and cultures, history projects and field trips, guerilla museums, music and motion research, drifting, various public

interventions, and a group show. Forthcoming this summer in our bulletin, Flying Stone.

To contact the Portland Surrealist Group write to:

Portland Surrealist Group  
c/o The Red & Black Café  
2138 SE Division  
Portland, OR 97202

## Death of an Anarchist

Pietro Valpreda, the Italian anarchist, dancer, and author who served three years in prison for a crime he didn't commit, died July 6 of cancer. He was 69.

In December 1969, a bomb exploded in a crowded Milan bank at the Piazza Fontana killing 16 people and injuring nearly 100. This occurred during a period of great political upheaval in Italy; fascism was once again on the rise and fascist groups were known to be actively engaged in such terror bombings.

However, several anarchists were arrested by the police on suspicion of planting the bomb; among them were Guiseppe Pinelli and Valpreda. Readers probably have heard of Pinelli. He became a martyr for the anarchist movement when he was killed during interrogation, thrown from the fourth floor of the Milan police headquarters. Nobel Prize-winning playwright, Dario Fo, wrote *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* depicting the story of Pinelli's death and the official hypocrisy that followed. Fo and his wife Franca Rome also assisted Valpreda in the struggle to prove his innocence.

During his own interrogation, Valpreda's captors used various psychological torture techniques in order to break his spirit. He was kept in solitary confinement for five weeks with only a few minutes each day for outside activity, which included taking a cold shower.

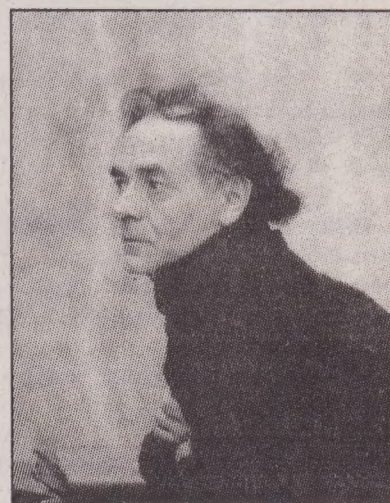
He was subjected to regular interrogations, but otherwise no one was allowed to speak to him. The police gave him a notebook hoping he would write a confession or other incriminating text. Each day they would take it away and read it, then give it back. After this technique failed, for Valpreda had committed no crime, they stopped taking the notebook away. That notebook became his only chance for mental survival. In it, he wrote a diary that was eventually published as an account of his imprisonment. An excerpt from his moving account follows:

In the morning they close the spyhole, and leave it shut until the evening. During the day, they open it only to pass food through. Through the spyhole I can see a gray corridor, with the doors of some cells on the left-hand side, and on the right the windows of the courtyard where I take my daily ten minutes of fresh air. Sometimes I see the sweeper passing by and the guards on duty. Nobody speaks to me. It's not much, but everything is relative; since I don't have anything else, this little patch of corridor has become very important to me; it's like a tiny window opening on to a marvelous panorama. (The Valpreda Papers, Pietro Valpreda. London: Victor Gollancz LTD, 1975).

After three years and several attempts to try him, the State was eventually forced to release Valpreda to house arrest, during which time he continued to work for justice to exonerate Pinelli and himself. They were not cleared until 1985 when a group of neo-fascists, led by Delfo Zorzi, were convicted for the bombing for which Valpreda, Pinelli, and several other anarchists were punished, Pinelli with his life. The fascists are currently serving life terms.

Valpreda remained active in anarchist circles throughout his life. In addition to publishing a book of poetry written in prison and his prison diaries in the 1970s, he later wrote several books, including a series of political novels and a detective story. He is survived by his wife Pia and son Tupac.

—Julie Herrada



## Calendar of Resistance, Revolt, and a bit of Reform

compiled by John J.

Please send calendar events to the Fifth Estate keeping in mind our quarterly schedule. We are especially interested in events for the Winter and Spring of '03 to be published in our next edition. [fifthstatenewspaper@yahoo.com](mailto:fifthstatenewspaper@yahoo.com) PO Box 6 Liberty, TN 37095

### **Oct. 3rd - 6th - Autonomous Media Conference, Tucson, AZ**

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For more info go to [www.consensus.net/autonomousmedia.html](http://www.consensus.net/autonomousmedia.html)

### **Oct. 6th - National Day of Resistance, Everywhere, USA**

Not In Our Name! - For the one-year anniversary of the bombings of Afghanistan, we in the US need to send a message to the people of the world that the U.S. Government does not speak or act for the people here. To get in involved visit [www.notinourname.net](http://www.notinourname.net) or email [notinourname@hotmail.com](mailto:notinourname@hotmail.com) or call 212-969-8058

### **Oct 5th - 9th - The October Uprising in Minneapolis, MN**

Join us in the streets Oct 5-9 to challenge the International Association of Chiefs of Police annual conference. The IACP works to share intelligence, information, training, and networking amongst law enforcement organizations. Visit the IACP at [www.theiacp.org](http://www.theiacp.org). Counter Conference info is at [www.expage.com/iacp2002mpl](http://www.expage.com/iacp2002mpl).

### **Oct. 5th - 15th - Actions for Nuclear Abolition, Newe Sogobia (Western Shoshone Nation), NV**

It's time to Stop the Madness! We invite you to join us in international nonviolent resistance to U.S. nuclear policies. Together we will build community and take direct action for nuclear abolition. For more information please contact the Shundahai Network PO Box 1115, Salt Lake City, UT 84110, [www.shundahai.org](http://www.shundahai.org) or email [reinard@shundahai.org](mailto:reinard@shundahai.org).

### **Oct. 10th - 13th - National Forest Protection Alliance 4th Annual Convention, Sisters, OR**

Join grassroots activists from across the nation as we build upon our vision for the permanent protection of our National Forests! For more information, please contact: Jeanette Russell, Network Coordinator, National Forest Protection Alliance P.O. Box 8264, Missoula, MT 59807 (406) 542-7565 [nfpa@forestadvocate.org](mailto:nfpa@forestadvocate.org) [www.forestadvocate.org](http://www.forestadvocate.org)

### **Oct. 10th - 13th - LadyFest South - Atlanta, GA**

Ladyfest is a feminist, multi-disciplinary women's arts festival including workshops. Any woman in any artistic, academic or political discipline can apply for a showcasing opportunity. Ladyfest South is a trans-inclusive event. Check out the website! <http://www.ladyfestsouth.org>

### **Oct. 11th - 14th - Transform Columbus Day Gathering and Protest, Denver, CO**

The Transform Columbus Day Alliance actively rejects the celebration of Christopher Columbus and his legacy of domination, oppression, and colonialism. [www.transformcolumbusday.org](http://www.transformcolumbusday.org)

### **Oct. 23rd - 27th - Second National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, Washington, DC.**

We gather to assess the progress made by the environmental justice movement and to develop the strategies for the next decade and beyond. For more information please contact: Zenaida Mendez, Project Coordinator, Second National People of Color Leadership Summit 310 8th Street, Suite 100 Oakland, CA 94607 (510) 267-1881 [EJSummit2@aol.com](mailto:EJSummit2@aol.com) [www.ejfund.org](http://www.ejfund.org)

### **Oct. 27th - Nov. 1st - Days of Action against the Free Trade Area of the Americas All across the western hemisphere**

"Americas Linked, Cooperating Against Neoliberalism and for Unity, Community, and Autonomy." Contact: [grito@andinet.net](mailto:grito@andinet.net), [ssc-cnc@campesinos-fmlgt.org.ec](mailto:ssc-cnc@campesinos-fmlgt.org.ec) or [dosomething@eudoramail.com](mailto:dosomething@eudoramail.com).

**Nov. 13-14 - "On the way to the SOA Tour" with David Rovics & the Dismal Jams Collective.** Join us in Tennessee on your way to the protest for two days of concerts, lectures, videos, and soapbox rants. Thursday night show at The Barn will benefit the Fifth Estate. Contact the Fifth Estate for details.

### **Nov. 15th - 17th - Shut Down the School of the Americas! - Columbus, GA**

Come to Fort Benning, GA to work towards a culture of justice and peace and defy the system of terror and violence. Please contact School of the Americas Watch PO Box 4566 Washington DC 20017 (202)-234-3440 [info@soaw.org](mailto:info@soaw.org) [www.soaw.org](http://www.soaw.org)

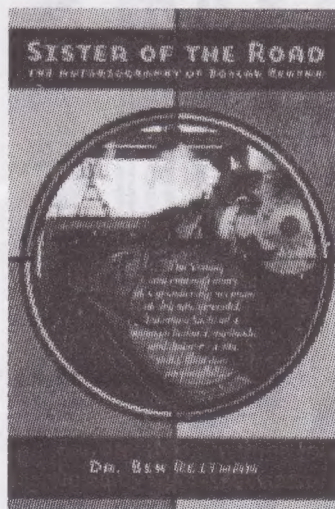
### **Jan. 3rd - 5th, 2003 - Vida Sin Fronteras, Nogales, Mexico**

Anarchists from AZ and Sonora, Mexico, are gathering to further anarchist networking across the border and throughout the Sonoran bioregion. Contact Butler B. P.O. Box 986 Bisbee, AZ 85603 email: [az\\_cdl@hotmail.com](mailto:az_cdl@hotmail.com)

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### New From Autonomedia Surrealist Subversions

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see our review on page 37

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CrimethInc., *Days Of War, Nights Of Love*  
(2001) \$6.00

CrimethInc., *Evasion* (2001) \$5.00  
(see the review on page 50)

Dark Star, *Beneath the Paving Stones*  
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*Against The Megamachine* (1998)

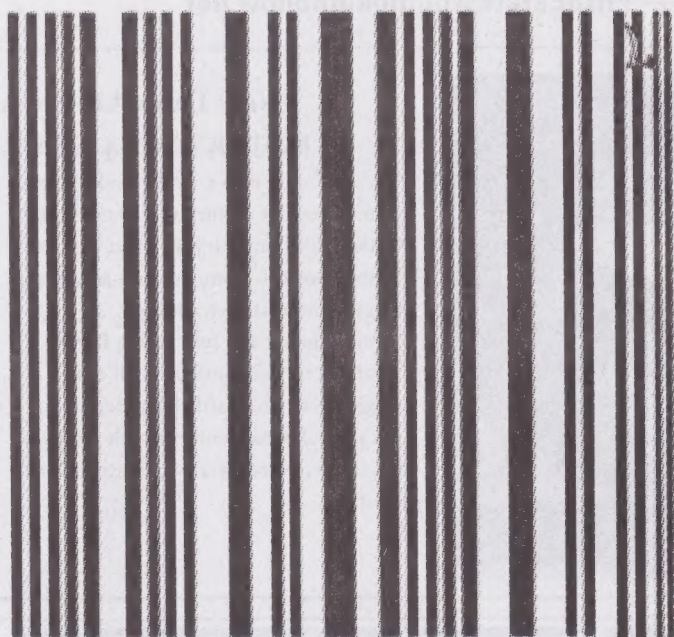
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